

A Study of Some
Theological and Literary Comparisons
of the Gospel of Matthew and
the Epistle of James

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1978



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CHAPTER ONE

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES:
AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES: AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

The orthodoxy or otherwise of the Epistle of James does not depend, as Kittel rightly claims, on assigning it to an early date or accepting the traditional view of authorship.¹ In point of fact, the epistle makes no claim to authorship by any particular person, beyond the simple common Hebraic name 'Iakωβoc. Therefore, even the interpreter who places accuracy of the written words of all Scripture at a high premium could also consistently accept a late date--perhaps as late as A.D. 200--and authorship by any person who was known by 'Iakωβoc as a given name, surname, or nom de plume. Traditional authorship or the lack of it is not a matter of concern in this discussion.

I. External Evidence

There is no explicit mention of the Epistle of James until Origen,² and it occurs only in his later writing,

¹Gerhard Kittel, "Geschichtliche Ort des Jakobus-briefs," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, 1951, p. 72.

²Some authorities have also suggested implicit references to the Epistle of James in much earlier writings, such as Clement of Rome, the Shepherd of Hermas, and Melito of Sardis. Cf. especially B.F. Westcott, The Canon of the New Testament (3rd ed., London: Macmillan and Co., 1870), pp. 47, 201. Cf. also The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers by a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 108ff, 127f, 137. There are also at least two third-century N.T. papyrus manuscripts which include parts of the Epistle of

in his commentary on the Gospel of John, on the passage 8:24¹ (written after his removal to Caesarea in 231²). The quotation concerns James' well-known "faith-works" passage: "If faith is spoken of, but is without works, such faith is dead as we read in the current epistle of James."³

In addition to this citation from the epistle, Origen "makes many quotations from our epistle, sometimes naming James as the source."⁴ Ropes cites at least nine such quotations from Origen,⁵ including those which refer to James as "apostle" (as does Paul in Galatians 1:19).

Eusebius placed the Epistle of James among the anti-legomena as far as authorship is concerned, along with Jude, II Peter, II and III John. Yet he used the epistle as if he were convinced that it was genuine.⁶

James, i.e. p 20 and p 23. Cf. K. Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri for N.T. Research," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, ed. J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 332; cf. Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, ed. G. Kilpatrick (2nd ed; London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1958), p. xii; cf. also The Greek New Testament, ed. K. Aland et. al., p. xii.

¹Origen, Commentariorum in Evangelium Joannis, Tomus XIX.23(6).

²R. V. G. Tasker, The General Epistle of James (London: The Tyndale Press, 1957), p. 18.

³Tasker's translation, loc. cit.

⁴James Hardy Ropes, The Epistle of James (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1916), p. 92.

⁵Loc. cit.

⁶J. B. Mayor, The Epistle of James, 3d ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1910), p. lxxvii, cites Eusebius' references: Eccl. Hist. ii.25, iii.2; In the edition of Lawlor and Oulton, the references are ii.23.24, and iii.25.3 (pp. 59, 87).

Jerome mentions the theory that the document was pseudonymous, in the latter part of the fourth century, although he himself judged it genuine, and included it in the Vulgate as a canonical book. Indeed, it was this inclusion which settled the matter of its canonicity for the West, ratified with the rest of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397.¹

The paucity of early references to James has caused scholars from Erasmus² and Luther³ to Moffatt⁴ and Reicke⁵ to dispute traditional authorship.

The epistle was accepted much earlier in Jerusalem and in Egypt than in the West.⁶ It was through the influence of Origen that the document won a place in the Egyptian versions.⁷

The only identification of the author which appears

¹Mayor, The Epistle of James, lxix.

²Tasker quotes Erasmus as having written, "that it lacked 'maiestatem illam et gravitatem apostolicam' and that the language was not Hebraic enough for a Bishop of Jerusalem," (citation in R. V. G. Tasker, The General Epistle of James, p. 14).

³Martin Luther, Septembertestament, 1522 Nachdruck des im Besitz der Universitätsbibliothek Halle/Saale befindlichen Originals: (Witten and Berlin: von Cansteinsche, n.d.) (pages not numbered). Cf. A. Meyer, Das Rätsel des Jakobusbriefes (Beiheft Z. N. T. W. 10, 1930), pp. 4 ff.

⁴James Moffatt, Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1927), pp. 468, 472.

⁵Bo Reicke, The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 4.

⁶Mayor, op. cit., lxix.

⁷Tasker, The General Epistle of James, p. 18.

in the Epistle of James is the simple phrase in 1:1, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Klijn lists seven persons¹ in the New Testament alone bearing this name. With this range of choice, and with the number of other persons in the primitive church who must have borne the same name--as well as churchmen of the succeeding generations called James--the author's simple self-identification would seem to be no help.

Unless the epistle is purely pseudonymous it is certain that the author was known by his readers. Although it has been said that the first verse is the only trace of epistolary form in the letter,² there are certain definite indications that the Epistle of James was written to a known group of people, and that he would be held in regard among them.³ That does not imply that the indi-

¹A. F. J. Klijn, An Introduction to the New Testament (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 149. He lists these persons by the name of James: a) The son of Zebedee, brother of John and disciple of the Lord. This James was put to death by Herod Agrippa circa A.D. 44 (Acts 12:2). b) James, son of Alphaeus, disciple of the Lord (Matt. 10:3, Mark 3:18, Lk. 6:51, Acts 1:15). c) James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19, I Cor. 15:7, cf. also Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18, Mark 6:3, and Matt. 13:55). d) James the younger, the son of Mary (not the mother of the Lord), the brother of Joseph (Mark 15:40, Matt. 27:56, Mark 16:1, and Lk. 24:10). e) James the father of Judas (Lk. 6:16 and Acts 1:13). f) James the writer of the present letter. g) James, the brother of Jude (Jude 1). Cf. also Ropes, James, pp. 53 ff. Of the seven listed by Klijn, it is possible that there is some duplication. Our immediate task is to consider whether "the writer of the present letter" may also be identified by one of the other designations.

²Ropes, James, p. 6.

³Among these indications is the term, "my beloved brethren" (1:19), going beyond the common Christian designation "brethren" (1:2,9; 2:1,14; 3:1, etc.). Or again,

viduals within the group were known personally, but only that their circumstances were not entirely foreign to him. If the writer was a man called James who was relatively obscure, one must assume that the letter was intended for a small readership, making it probable that this James was known and respected as a person of authority by the small community. But for James the president of the Christian community at Jerusalem, a wide range of readership must be allowed: a small or large community, or more than one.

All serious scholars have disallowed James the son of Zebedee as a possible author because of the very early date of his martyrdom at the hands of Herod Agrippa (C.A.D. 44). James the son of Alphaeus, another of the twelve, seems hardly likely as a possible author. Though little is known of him, "if a member of the original twelve had been the writer, it is most unlikely that this would ever have been forgotten. It is not even likely that his name would have been superseded by that of James of Jerusalem."¹

Of James, the father of Judas, and James, the brother of Jude, virtually nothing is known. The name in each case was helpful in designation of other persons, and so

the knowledge of wars and fightings among them (f:l ff.), or the polemic against preferential treatment given to the rich, which seems to have more than the ring of a hypothetical situation. Every writer attempting to assess the character of the readers admits as much.

¹C. Leslie Mitton, The Epistle of James, (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1966), p. 223. The same objection applies to the James known as "the less."

may have been known rather widely: although with common names further qualifying designations are always helpful; and this is not a sign that the James himself was known, but merely that this name helped to identify this Judas (Jude). No further conjecture is possible concerning the identification of these with the writer of the Epistle. The difficulties concerning the acceptance of the self-identification as "James" will be discussed below.¹

In addition to this identification the internal evidence includes the obvious fact that the epistle is a Jewish-Christian work.² Much within the epistle has its basis in the Old Testament.³ Analogies are drawn from numerous places within the Old Testament Scriptures.⁴ The thought patterns of the Epistle of James are so thoroughly characteristic of the Judaism of its time that theories proposing that the epistle was not actually a Christian work at all, but a Jewish production with interpolations, have been put forth.⁵

The addressees of the letter are described as "the

¹pp. 11ff.

²Cf. Jean Daniélou, Histoire des Doctrines Chrétiennes avant Nicée: Théologie du Judaéo-Christianisme, (Paris: Desclee & Cie, 1958), pp. 202, 420. The inclusion of the Epistle of James in Daniélou's broad classification of Jewish Christianity does not necessarily imply heterodoxy for the writing.

³This is so even though the direct quotations are only five in number: viz., James 1:11; 2:8,11,23; 4:6.

⁴Mayor, James, lxix ff. finds references to, or echoes of, no fewer than twenty-two Old Testament books.

⁵Cf. the theories of Spitta, Der Brief des Jakobus, 1896; and A. Meyer, Ratsel des Jakobasbriefes.

twelve tribes of the dispersion" (1:1), and though there is disagreement as to the precise intent of this phrase it is most unlikely that this form of address would be used by any Gentile writer, or by any writer directing his epistle to Gentile Christians.¹

There are indications within our epistle which seem to strengthen the possibility that the writer may be James, a brother of Jesus. For one example, it may be noted that there are many "echoes" of the teachings of Jesus, as represented in the Gospels, in the Epistle of James. These will be discussed more fully in chapter ten, but it is well to note them at this point. This listing is adapted from Schlatter.²

James 4:3	-	Matthew 7:7,8
James 4:12	-	Matthew 10:28
James 5:15	-	Matthew 12:32
James 2:5	-	Matthew 4:23
James 5:12	-	Matthew 5:34
James 2:4	-	Matthew 21:21
James 2:4	-	Matthew 15:19
James 1:5	-	Matthew 7:7
James 4:5	-	Matthew 26:53

¹This may be said in full recognition of the statements of Paul on the matter, i.e., Rom. 2:26ff., Rom. 11:17ff, contra, Ropes, James, p. 40; Moffatt, ILNT, p. 464.

²A. Schlatter, Der Brief des Jakobus (Zweite Auflage; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1956) hereafter abbreviated Jakobus, pp. 19-21. There are not many such references to the other three Gospels, and for the purposes of this paper I have kept in focus those which refer specifically to Matthew.

James 5:8	-	Matthew 3:2
James 2:19	-	Matthew 19:17
James 2:13	-	Matthew 23:23
James 5:16	-	Matthew 3:6
James 1:27	-	Matthew 25:36
James 2:14	-	Matthew 17:20
James 5:16	-	Matthew 5:13
James 2:5	-	Matthew 25:34
James 5:9	-	Matthew 7:1
James 5:3	-	Matthew 8:4
James 3:11	-	Matthew 7:16
James 5:12	-	Matthew 5:37
James 5:8	-	Matthew 24:3
James 3:9	-	Matthew 11:25
James 1:16	-	Matthew 22:25
James 5:16	-	Matthew 5:44
James 3:10	-	Matthew 15:11
James 1:21	-	Matthew 16:25
James 4:10	-	Matthew 18:4
James 1:4	-	Matthew 5:48
James 2:10	-	Matthew 19:17
James 5:11	-	Matthew 10:22
James 4:10	-	Matthew 23:12

In addition to this listing from the Gospel of Matthew, Schlatter produces a shorter list of comparisons with Mark (four such parallels). It has been suggested from this evidence that the writer of the Epistle of James, without having access to the Gospels in written form knew

enough of Jesus' pattern of speaking to reproduce echoes of his teaching.¹

The evidence that the Epistle of James was written originally in Greek is overwhelming.² Hardly any scholar of repute entertains the idea of an Aramaic original. In view of this fact, Schlatter's statement is significant: "Die palästinische Heimat des Jakobus zeigt diese Liste deutlich, da ein beträchtlicher Teil dieser gemeinsamen Formeln Parallelbildungen zu semitischen Worten sind."³

Again in regard to internal evidence on authorship, note must be taken of the apparent similarities between the epistle and the account of the Jerusalem Council, and of the epistle which was its outcome in Acts 15. There are, even within the narrow confines of the two writings, certain similarities which could point to a common author. The greeting ("χαίρειν") is used in both (James 1:1, Acts 15:23), and only once elsewhere⁴ in the same form, in all the New Testament. Only in these two places⁵ do we have the exhortation, "Ἀκούσατε ἀδελφοί μου" . . . "ἀδελφοί ἀκούσατέ μου." Other words which appear in both passages

¹Cf. also A. Meyer, op. cit., p. 85.

²Cf. Mayor, op. cit., cclxii f. and Ropes, op. cit., p. 27.

³Schlatter, Jakobus, loc. cit.

⁴Acts 23:26. This is, of course, a common greeting in Greek letters generally, and little may be made of it as evidence alone. The paucity of such a greeting in the New Testament enhances its value somewhat, but the weight of the evidence is cumulative.

⁵Acts 15:15; James 2:5.

are ἐπισκέπτεσθε, in Acts 15:14 and James 1:27; ἀγαπητός, in Acts 15:25 and James 1:16,19, and 2:5; ἐπιστρέφην in Acts 15:19 and James 5:19 and 20. James' use of "τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα" by which his readers were called appears analogous to the statement by James of Jerusalem concerning the Gentiles "who are called by my name."¹ Besides these, there are additional, less important, similarities.²

Taken in sum, what can be said about them? Three main possibilities exist. First, it may be mere coincidence that within so short a space in Acts this relatively large number of similar phrases and identical words is to be found. As a second possibility, the Epistle of James may be a pseudonymous work whose author intentionally included scattered reminiscences of James and of his influence as recorded by Luke. Or third, the account in Acts may be a valid recollection of the words of James and the Council's epistle (which assuredly would bear the stamp of his thought, personality, and mode of expression). The third possibility supports the view that the Epistle of James may be taken as an authentic production of James of Jerusalem, the brother of Jesus.³ A fourth, highly im-

¹James 2:7; Acts 15:17.

²Cf. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction: Hebrews to Revelation (London: The Tyndale Press, 1966), p. 66.

³Cf. the extensive discussion concerning James the Lord's brother and other persons named James, by Ropes (op. cit., pp. 53-74).

probable, alternative exists: that the Epistle of James was the pattern for the production of parts of Acts 15. This is unlikely.

As to the first possibility, that the correspondence between the Epistle of James and Acts 15:13-29 is merely coincidental, some scholars have maintained such a view.¹ Yet the great number of corresponding words and phrases in so short a passage attributed to James (in Acts) can hardly be explained by "the common accidents of speech."²

The second suggestion, that the writer of the Epistle of James intentionally utilized words and phrases from the 17-verse passage in Acts to give something of an authentic flavor to his epistle, bears consideration. Possibly one who knew something of the teaching of James of Jerusalem utilized Luke's writing to gather "authentic" forms of expression and lend credence to his work. However, Guthrie considers this quite improbable, and "generally contrary to pseudepigraphic procedure."³ Though the probability may be slight this option must be reserved.

¹Notably Spitta, op. cit., p. 43, for whom such a view was essential to maintain his theory of the Jewish origin of the epistle.

²Cf. Guthrie, loc. cit., R. V. G. Tasker, op. cit., p. 26, cautions against excessive importance being placed on this evidence. Mayer, op. cit., p. iii f., in discussing the similarities, says "I cannot but think it a remarkable coincidence that, out of 230 words contained in the speech and circular, so many should reappear in our Epistle, written on a totally different subject."

³Guthrie, op. cit., p. 67. Cf. his extensive appendix on "Epistolic Pseudepigraphy" in New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles (London: Tyndale Press, 1964), pp. 282, 294.

In regard to the third possibility--that the parallels must be explained as coming from the selfsame source, James, natural objections can be raised. Serious objections have been made as to the authenticity of the speech of James recorded in Acts.¹ Others do not admit to the validity of the items of correspondence.² On the other hand, if taken at face value, they would seem to settle the matter of Jacobean authorship. The need for caution notwithstanding, this third possibility should not be rejected out of hand in favor of the former two which also present difficulties. Mitton's conclusion on the evidence is properly cautious: these correspondences have a "certain force" for corroboration of identity of the two speakers when added to the other favorable arguments, but in themselves they are insufficient to be conclusive.³

There are a number of important objections to authorship of the Epistle of James by the brother of Jesus. One

¹E.g. G. H. C. Macgregor, The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), IX, pp. 203, 205. Cf. also Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary (Trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn, under the supervision of Hugh Anderson, trans. revised and brought up to date by R. McL. Wilson) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), p. 448. Haenchen sums up one part of the argument, "the Jewish Christian James would not in Jerusalem have used a Septuagint text, differing from the Hebrew original, as scriptural proof. It is not James but Luke who is speaking here." loc. cit. Cf. also Martin Dibelius, Studies in the Acts of the Apostles, ed. Heinrich Greeven, trans. Mary Ling (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 100. Dibelius says, "Luke's treatment of the event is only literary-theological and can make no claim to historical worth." loc. cit.

²Cf. McNeile, who minimizes the evidence (op. cit., p. 209); and Ropes, (James) who never mentions it.

³Mitton, op. cit., p. 231.

of these is the absence of any early tradition associating the name of James of Jerusalem with an epistle. This admittedly is an argument from silence, and therefore one must not force it to bear more weight than it will stand. Klijn,¹ for example, says that the particular stance of the epistle, having little "theological" and christological content, would therefore rather easily be neglected by the church at large. Ropes, who argues for a late date and for pseudonymous authorship for the letter, also gives one hypothesis accounting for the obscurity of the epistle and the absence of references to it from the time of its initial reading (in the first half of the second century in some secluded part of Palestine) to the time of Origen (or perhaps of Clement of Alexandria): "Having no immediate significance for current controversy, it was preserved in Palestine alone for nearly or quite a century."² If such a thing as the disappearance of the epistle might have happened early in the second century, when the name of James (and of other relatives of the Lord) had acquired great significance and importance in the Church,³ is it not equally possible that such a course might have been the case in an earlier time before the veneration of the Lord's relatives was common, and when churches in smaller communities suffered even more isolation?

¹A. F. J. Klijn, An Introduction to the New Testament, (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 150.

²Ropes, James, p. 51.

³Cf. Kittel, Geschichtliche Ort, p. 73f.

Indeed, if this epistle is the only one written by James of Jerusalem, and if it was sent to some small or isolated Christian community which felt the letter worth preserving for itself (but felt no necessity of copying it and sending it on to another congregation), then it would not be at all surprising that a tradition concerning an epistle of James was never widespread. In that case the greatest surprise would be that it ever came to light at all: yet the scholars seem agreed at least that there was a period of obscurity for this document.¹

A second objection to the traditional view of authorship is the complete absence of allusions to the proofs of resurrection and the messianic claims of Christ. Ropes says, "In such a document . . . conspicuous omissions are likely not to be accidental, but to indicate the absence of the ideas from the writer's thinking or, at any rate, their relative unimportance for his vital religion."² Now it is very difficult to understand how the resurrection of Christ or the Messianic claims which He made could be considered relatively unimportant for any Christian at all of the first or second centuries--more so for

¹Cf. the discussion of date in Moffatt, ILNT, p. 471. Generally the more conservative scholars favor the earlier dates; and the converse is also true, with exceptions. No one seriously argues for a period after A.D. 150, which still leaves at least seventy or eighty "silent" years, regardless of who wrote the epistle, and no matter what the date.

²Ropes, James, p. 31. However, Ropes also says: "In any short tract of practical rather than systematic character not all sides of the writer's thought will be represented." (p. 28).

a Christian Jew. Yet Ropes himself admits that some Christian of that era did write the letter, and almost certainly a Jewish Christian:¹ "There is no sentence which a Jew could have written and a Christian could not."²

If it would be intolerable to accept James of Jerusalem as writer on these grounds, why not any other Christian? Were not the Christians those whose lives had been altered through personal encounter with the claims of Christ and Christ Himself? How would any Christian omit such references to his Lord? Yet the fact is that some Christian did so. The argument is advanced that the difficulty is really that of the failure to refer to the special appearance to James by the risen Lord (I Cor. 15:7). In fact, however, Paul apparently believed that the Lord's appearance to him was equally valid, yet in vast portions of his writings--and in whole epistles much longer than that of James--he makes no reference to such an appearance. Even in Galatians, where Paul is concerned to assert his authority, he makes no explicit reference either to his having seen the risen Lord or indeed to resurrection itself. The writer appears to be well-known to his readers, and he did not need to mention the resurrection appearance as a credential (much as Paul was silent on such an appearance especially where his credentials were unchallenged).

This letter is brief and its subject matter parenetic.

¹Ibid., p. 33. ²Ropes, loc. cit.

In truth, it is difficult to ring the bell for all Christian dogma¹ in the space of seventeen hundred words, especially when one's purpose is definitely less catechetical or dogmatic than hortatory.

All this is not to say that authorship by James the Lord's brother tends to solve the problem. Omission of specific references to the work of Christ is puzzling: but authorship by the James in question hardly compounds the difficulty beyond reason.

The third great difficulty with acceptance of the traditional authorship of the Epistle of James is probably the most weighty. Could the Galilean-become-resident of Jerusalem have had such a command of the Greek language and Hellenistic literature as to produce this epistle?²

It is certain at this point in New Testament studies that the knowledge of the Greek language and Greek culture as well, was much more widespread in Palestine in the first century than some of the earlier scholars had imagined.³

¹See below, p. 99ff.

²McNeile, Introduction, p. 205, says, "Anyone who knew the early conditions knew that St. James could not have written the epistle in its Greek shape." McNeile overstates the case.

³In fact, it is difficult to dispel the rumor of ignorance of Greek in apostolic times. Nearly seventy years ago, Moulton, A Grammar of NT Greek (Vol. 1, 1908, pp. 6-8) gave evidence against the idea. And twenty years before that, T. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament (1st ed. German, Erlangen, 1888; English ed. Edinburgh, 1909), pp. 36-50. Moffatt (ILNT, p. 474 n.d.), in his revision of 1918 referred to such evidence. Since that time much has been written on the subject (Cf. one of the most recent works, J.N. Sevenster, Do You Know Greek? (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), yet it is still necessary for writers and lecturers to whisk away the cobwebs and review work of

With commerce and military occupation forcing foreigners and foreign tongues into Palestine,¹ for their own security and prosperity the people would see the advantage of knowing the Greek language.²

It has been suggested that James certainly knew persons in Jerusalem capable of serving as secretary. The evidence against the epistle's being a translation militates against the idea that James employed such a person merely for the translation of his thoughts, without completely precluding that possibility.

Moulton wrote, "It is noteworthy that there are one or two passages in which the writer shows his knowledge also of the Hebrew text."³ It is interesting in light of the fact that scholars have remarked on the "excellent Greek" of the Epistle of James, that "there are many cases of the use of Biblical phrases, correct but slightly unhellenic."⁴ In fact, Tasker,⁵ and Mitton⁶ indicate that

three earlier generations.

¹Nothing could be less imaginable than Roman troops learning Aramaic for the convenience of the local populace! As a modern analogy, witness the growth of English as the nearest thing to a universal language in the world today, largely through British and American commercial and military presence during the past hundred years.

²Cf. R. O. P. Taylor, "Did Jesus Speak Aramaic," Expository Times, 56 (1944-45): pp. 95-97.

³Moulton, J. H., "Characteristics of New Testament Greek," The Expositor, 6th series, X (1904).

⁴Ropes, James, p. 26. He cites at least 20 examples.

⁵Tasker, James, p. 29.

⁶Mitton, The Epistle of James, p. 228. Cf. Cadoux, The Thought of St. James, (James Clarke & Co. London, 1944),

the quality of the Greek has been overstressed.

Sevenster, in his recent work, speaks authoritatively from the archaeological evidence which he has earlier discussed:

Since the finds in the caves on Israeli soil have proved beyond all doubt not only that Jewish scribes composed records in Greek, but more particularly that letters in Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek were sent to the same Jewish leaders from the same Jewish centre . . . it is now definitely established that the knowledge and use of Greek was often quite a normal phenomenon in Jewish circles.¹

The evidence from Palestine in the first century definitely indicates that a Palestinian Jewish Christian of that period could have written an epistle in good Greek.²

With so little available knowledge of the personality and motivation of James the Lord's brother, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty that he was not himself well versed in the Greek language and, for that matter, in Greek wisdom literature of the intertestamental period as well as the Scriptures in the Septuagint version. It is not uncommon for a man to rise far above the circumstances of his home and early environment, provided he has motivation for doing so.

Moffatt removes the force from another objection to the traditional view of authorship for the Epistle of James, i.e., that the subject matter of the epistle, espe-

p. 37, for a brief discussion of Hebraisms and his reasons for criticism of the quality of Greek.

¹Sevenster, J. N., Do You Know Greek? (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), p. 177.

²Ibid., p. 191.

cially in 2:14-26, presupposes a knowledge of the teaching and preaching of Paul. Moffatt's statement is that the argument would be obviated by accepting a date for the epistle near the end of James' life (A.D. 60-62). However, not to narrow the date of the letter too much for the present, one may ask if it is necessary to see the particular passage in question as related to Paul's theology. On the face of it the combination of the terms "faith" and "works" seems to cry out to be compared with the passages in Paul's writings which deal with faith.¹ A closer examination of the comparison will be made in Chapter six;² however, for the present it will suffice to point out that some scholars have seen a reflection in the other direction; that Paul's words on faith were written against the background of the words of James.³ Inasmuch as the generally accepted dates for Romans (A.D. 56-58) and Galatians (some time prior to A.D. 55) allow time for James of Jerusalem to become familiar with those letters, the possibility that James wrote in response to them does not negate traditional authorship.

Thus far then, there is an open field, allowing authorship by anyone--even the man who, by virtue of the address (in 1:1) might be considered the most obvious contender, since none of the strong objections usually ad-

¹Mayor, The Epistle of James, xci f.

²Infra, pp. 143f., cf. also pp. 39f.

³Ibid.

vanced against James the Lord's brother would seem to rule out his position as writer.

Naturally there are scholars who suggest that the author was some unknown man who appended the name "James" in order to give force to his words.¹ It is often claimed that pseudonymity was a common device in early Christian literature, and that the highest of motives can be ascribed to those who chose to write in this way, in the name of some great man.² This whole concept is seriously and strongly challenged by such writers as Torm,³ Guthrie⁴ and Kittel.⁵ Even Aland, who persuasively argues for the existence of an honest and honorable pseudonymity admits that in giving details (such as those in the fourth chapter of 2 Timothy and in Titus) a pseudonymous writer intends outright forgery.⁶ He insists that both kinds of pseudonymity existed in the earlier period, and that gradually the less commendable form--"forger"--was the

¹McNeile, Introduction, p. 205; Cf. also Bo Reicke, The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 4.

²Kurt Aland, "The Problem of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in Christian Literature of the First Two Centuries." Journal of Theological Studies, NS. XII, 1969, p. 44.

³Frederic Torm, Die Psychologie der Pseudonymität im Hinblick auf die Literatur des Urchristentums (Gutersloh, 1932).

⁴Donald Guthrie, "The Development of the Idea of Canonical Pseudepigrapha in New Testament Criticism," SPCK Theological Collections 4 (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), pp. 14-39. See also his analysis in New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles, (op. cit., pp. 282-294).

⁵Kittel, "Geschichtliche Ort," p. 75f.

⁶Aland, "Anonymity and Pseudonymity," p. 47.

only sort of pseudonymity left, while the more honest Christian writers produced works in their own names.¹

But is there any evidence that Aland's theory on the earlier "honest pseudonymity" is correct? He gives as "the only conceivable hypothesis"² this account of the origin of the Didache:

The heart of the matter is the claim of the writing and its acceptance in the Church as an authoritative document. Its unknown author, let us call him X, must have had a concrete residence and a concrete sphere of activity. How did the Didachè make its way at this place where the author was known by everybody? Are we to assume that, after its completion, X had it discovered as a holy book of the past, just as happened with the book of Deuteronomy under Josiah, and that in this way the Didache won its authority? Or are we to presume that he first sent his work to distant friends, so that it should first make its way at a place where the author was unknown, and then return to his area of activity, the place of its actual origin? Both possibilities are rather impossibilities. The only conceivable hypothesis is that the author of the writing introduced it first to his own congregation, probably by reading it in the service of worship. Indeed, the congregation knew that this address was written by its elder, X. But when he claimed his work to be the message of the Lord through the apostles, and when his own congregation and the neighboring acknowledged this to be valid, they did this only because it was the written version of what hitherto had been orally delivered in any congregational meeting: a prophet got up and preached the word of the Lord. Everyone knew the prophet and his human affairs. But when he spoke with inspired utterance it was not he that was heard but the Lord or the apostles or the Holy Spirit himself.³

¹Ibid., Aland does not give a specific date for this change in approach, but appears to presume it to have been in active process from about 150 onward (pp. 40,41).

²Aland, op. cit., p. 44.

³Ibid.

It seems possible that such a process may have taken place at some time in the Church, but this is hardly "the only conceivable hypothesis". For a man who claimed to have a charismatic prophetic gift, to read his own work in the presence of a congregation would be unlikely at a time when great stress was placed on the Spirit's giving utterance. But even if that were acceptable, it is almost inconceivable that he could retain credibility if he appended, not the name of the Lord, or of the Apostles (generally the twelve), but the name of some specific Apostle or apostolic leader. Only if his congregation knew that the speaker (or "reader"?) had earlier had some close association with the man in whose name he wrote, is this hypothesis able to bear much weight. Otherwise, such a practice would be tantamount to saying, "James (or Andrew, or Paul, or Thomas) spoke to me last night, though dead these twenty years: and this is what he said--I've written it down." Rather a man should write in the name of the Lord, or his own, or forge a document out-right.¹

The evidence for pseudonymity of the Epistle of James is hardly conclusive: is it reasonable, for example, to believe that a writer would intend to attribute his work to James the Righteous without specifying that it was that James? The very simplicity² of the introduction

¹Gospels, of course--at least those which were finally accepted to be canonical, were all anonymous. Epistles generally were not. This may be noted by observation. Cf. Infra, pp. 91f.

²Kittel, op. cit., p. 75.

leaves one wishing to hear more about the writer. Which James of the many? What are his credentials? What is his qualification for writing to Christians in this tone (cf. 4:1ff.)? But all he tells is that he is a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. The address seems only in keeping with the personality of an authoritative writer who did not have to assert his own authority. This is contrary to general pseudepigraphic practice, which through expansive reference to the assumed author established authority for the writing.¹

In summary, Guthrie speaks well on the matter of pseudonymity when he says,

There are none of the suggested examples including the Epistle of James which bear any close resemblance to the known Jewish or apocryphal or pseudo-Christian pseudepigrapha. Aland is right in concluding that these latter show no evidence of possession of the Spirit and, therefore, cannot be used to explain the former.²

Consideration of the Date of the Epistle

It is natural that the date of the Epistle of James will have a great bearing upon decisions concerning its authorship. Any date after A.D. 62³ will rule out author-

¹Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 754.

²Guthrie, "The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament," op. cit., p. 39.

³Or at the latest A.D. 68 which is the time Hegesippus assigns for James' death. Hegesippus is almost certainly unreliable in date, as also in his graphic detail on the death. Ropes writes: "The narrative itself, even when purged of its inner inconsistencies, is a legend, betraying no close contact with the events . . ." (James, p. 66).

ship by James the Lord's brother, just as any date prior to that time will allow it.

The matter of the Greek of the epistle has been discussed above,¹ and support adduced to indicate that the persistent idea that "early Christians don't write good Greek" is not a necessary conclusion from the evidence. With the relatively common use of Greek among Palestinian Jews of the first century, the type of language used is not helpful to establish a date.

Another matter, the presumed prevalence of pseudonymity among early Christian writings, may be considered more calmly, inasmuch as no examples of pseudonymity which bear similarity to the Epistle of James have been produced. Pseudonymity for James is possible, but not probable.

Again, the internal evidence must be relied on in regard to date. There are many considerations to be taken into account on this matter. Kümmel² mentions only one: that the "doctrinal separation from Paul" prevents dating earlier than the end of the first century, as if there were no evidence to the contrary. In fact, Kümmel has here reversed the conclusion of his predecessors, Paul Feine and Johannes Behm. Their examination of the evidence led them to conclude a date no later than A.D. 60.³

¹Pp. 16-18.

²Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, 14th revised ed. of Feine-Behm, Einleitung . . . trans. A. T. Mattill (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 291.

³Paul Feine, Einleitung in das Neue Testament, (dritte

It is certain that the doctrinal matter to which Kümmel alludes¹ must be taken into consideration. But there is more: the following list may give some indication of the complexity of the situation, but also of the evidence which does exist as to the date.

The presence of wealthy persons in the assembly

The similarities to and differences from other New Testament documents

The state of the converts, and the sins laid to their charge

The problem of the relationship of faith and works, as compared with the writings of Paul

A total absence of references to the Jewish-Gentile controversy

Absence of any reference to the conflict with Rome or the fall of Jerusalem

The absence of any significant development of church order

The relatively strong Jewish tone of the letter

The presence of some degree of persecution.

The absence of Christology

The presence of a vital eschatology

The great degree of similarity to Jesus' parabolic teaching

It is obvious, of course, that all of these items are not of equal value. Nevertheless they must all be considered in order to arrive at a clear view of the situa-

Auflage, Leipzig, 1932), pp. 197-199. Also cf. Paul Feine-Johannes Behm, Eileitung in das Neue Testament (Elfte Auflage, 1956), p. 239ff.

¹Kümmel, loc. cit.

tion.

Many of these items are often said by commentators to support a late date. But we need to look briefly at each in turn to see whether that is so.

1. The Presence of Wealthy Persons in the Church.

The presence of wealthy persons in the assembly is mentioned in three passages in the Epistle of James (1:10-11; 2:2-6; 5:1-5). In arguing his case for a later date, Reicke says, "readers are warned against intimate association with the rich of the world, i 2-7, iv 13-v 6 (sic),"¹ and states that this is a condition of a period later than the time of Paul's ministry. But it is not so certain that these passages point to a late date.

Among the Jews who became Christians in the earliest years of the Church, there were undoubtedly some who were merchants (e.g. Lydia) and tax collectors (as Zacchaeus and Levi/Matthew). The three thousand who according to Acts responded to Peter's invitation at Pentecost were, as likely as not, not all of the same economic class.² Outside of Jerusalem we read of no strong encouragement

¹Reicke, op. cit., p. 5. But in fact there is no warning against such association: neither of the passages Reicke adduces has any such warning, and of the seventeen verses he mentions only the last six of the latter passages have any reference to the rich or to riches.

²This is not to imply that I conclude that the Epistle of James was intended for the believers in Jerusalem, but it is merely illustrative of the probability of diversity in the early fellowship (if the Jerusalem community was at all in view, the address to the "dispersion" makes it probable that Jerusalem was one of the several communities intended).

to such an experiment in community of property as that in Acts 4:34-37. And in the Church at Ephesus there were some who were not attracted to live in Paul's ascetic manner.¹

2. The Relationship to Other New Testament Documents

The literary relation of the Epistle of James to the writings of Paul is not well established. For example, Mayor asserts that in view of the total absence of other evidence there is more likelihood that Paul was familiar with the Epistle of James than that the reverse is true.² His conclusion is highly debatable, and the strong possibility must be allowed that there is no use at all of Paul by James or of James by Paul: that both writers expressed their own types of Christian message, in somewhat different terms, and developed independently from the oral tradition and the pressures to which they were individually responding.³ Rendall's examination of the relationships between the Epistle of James and Paul's Epistle to the Romans is clear and thorough, though now somewhat dated.⁴

¹Acts 20:33 seems to imply that some Christians at Ephesus possessed gold, silver, and perhaps fine apparel.

²Mayor, op. cit., pp. xci ff.

³It is interesting to note that Sidebottom, E. M., The Century Bible: New Edition. James, Jude and 2 Peter (London: Nelson & Sons, 1967), p. 17, cites their use of Abraham's example "to prove opposite conclusions without apparently being aware that they are doing so. The two lines of argument, in fact, run parallel without ever touching . . . All the terms involved are used in a different sense by each protagonist." Cf. Infra, pp. 39-46.

⁴G. H. Rendall, The Epistle of James and Judaic

His conclusion, like that of Mayor, is that Paul had access to the Epistle of James. But one may state with justification that if Paul had the Epistle of James, he made very little use of it. On the other hand, if James had Paul's writings, he made extremely poor use of them. Literary dependence on either side is unlikely.¹

The many close parallels with the First Epistle of Peter, too, have been variously interpreted, with some concluding that I Peter was earlier² and some that the Epistle of James has prior claim.³ Rendall, with careful analysis of the parallels establishes a case for the priority of James.⁴ A listing of parallels found in The Greek New Testament⁵ includes fifteen parallels from I Peter in James. They are:

Christianity. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), pp. 84-87. The specific matter of faith and works in the writings of James and Paul will be discussed further in a later section (infra., pp. 150-158).

¹Perhaps one needs only to ask whether anyone before the existence of a Canon in which both the letters of Paul and James stand would have seen any necessary relationship between the two. Cf. further remarks on this subject supra, pp. 18 f., infra, pp. 39-46, and 150 ff.

²E.g. Moffatt, ILNT, pp. 338, 466.

³Cf. Schlatter (Jakobus, p. 73), who is so firmly convinced that Peter knew and used the Epistle of James, and that this was recognized by the post-apostolic Church, that he goes so far as to say "The judgment of Peter concerning the Epistle explains at the same time why it did not disappear, but passed over into the possession of the Greek church." (translation ours).

⁴Rendall, op. cit., pp. 96-100.

⁵Kurt Aland, et. al., eds., The Greek New Testament, 2d ed. (United Bible Societies, 1970), pp. 779-804.

James	I Peter
1:1	1:1
1:2	1:6
1:3	1:7
1:10-11	1:24
1:12	5:4
1:18	1:23
1:21	2:1
1:25	2:16
2:12	2:16
4:1	2:11
4:6	(5:5)
4:7	5:8-9
4:10	5:6
5:8	4:7
5:20	4:8

Merely reading the parallels between the two epistles is sufficient to provide a view of the great degree of similarity between them. What is especially noteworthy is the sort of theology which is expressed in the two works. I Peter is full of Christological utterances and developed theology, some of it in line with that of Paul.¹ He has all the expected expressions of New Testament kerygma which James has not. But it is the general order

¹E.g. the following terms, familiar in Paul, absent from James, and found in the first chapter of I Peter: "chosen," "destined," "sanctified," "resurrection," "inheritance," "grace," "Holy Spirit," "blood of Christ," "before the foundation of the world." Cf. also E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter: the Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays (London: Macmillan & Co., 1964), p. 353.

in which similar thoughts are expressed (or similar, and in some cases identical, words are used) which provides the strongest case for the use of one writer's work by the other.

How can this be explained? By supposing that a Christian writer took the first Epistle of Peter and stripped it of its distinctively Christian content--that is, all but two mentions of Jesus Christ, the portions on the parousia of Christ, and the many sayings of Jesus which he wished to include? Rather, if there is direct dependency, it is more plausible that one writer found the Epistle of James to his liking, and filled its skeleton with a fuller measure of Christian truth.¹

As for parallels between the two documents, the following will serve as one example:

James 1:2	I Peter 1:6
πάσαν χαρὰν ἡγήσασθε...	ἐν ᾧ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε, ὀλίγον...
ὅταν <u>πειρασμοῖς</u> περιπέσητε	λυπηθέντες ἐν <u>ποικίλοις</u>
<u>ποικίλοις</u> , γινώσκοντες	<u>πειρασμοῖς</u> ,
ὅτι τὸ <u>δοκίμιον</u> ὑμῶν <u>τῆς</u>	ἵνα τὸ <u>δοκίμιον</u> ὑμῶν <u>τῆς</u>
<u>πίστεως</u> κατεργάζεται	<u>πίστεως</u> . . . εὐρεθῇ εἰς
ὑπομονήν	ἔπαινον. . . .

The parallel is the more striking because of the dis-

¹Cf. Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 72f. This statement must be modified if the Epistle of James is seen to be addressed to non-Christian Jews. However even in that case, the evidence still strongly supports the priority of James.

tinctive phrases,¹ unusual in the New Testament and contemporary literature. Examination appears to lend credence to an early date for the Epistle of James; for it provides strong evidence that James is the more primitive of the two documents in question.²

But it is sufficient to point out the similarity of much subject matter, the great amount of common vocabulary, the greater development in the expressions of I Peter, and the striking identity of the order (especially note here the last three parallels).

James	I Peter
(1:1) ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ <u>διασπορᾷ</u>	(1:1) ἐκλεκτοῖς παρεπιδήμοις <u>διασπορᾷς</u> Πόντου. . . .
(1:2) πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἡγήσασθε, . . . ὅταν <u>πειρασμοῖς</u> περιπέσῃτε <u>ποικίλοις</u>	(1:6) ἀγαλλιᾶσθε . . . ἐν <u>ποικίλοις</u> <u>πειρασμοῖς</u>
(1:3) γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ <u>δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως</u> κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν . . .	(1:7) ἵνα τὸ <u>δοκίμιον ὑμῶν</u> <u>τῆς πίστεως</u> . . . εὐρεθῇ εἰς
(1:4) ἵνα ᾦτε τέλειοι καὶ ὁλόκληροι, ἐν μὴδενὶ λειπόμενοι.	ἔπαινον καὶ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

¹The single term ποικίλος occurs only twice in all the Pauline corpus, only ten times in the New Testament, yet three occurrences are in James and I Peter. In addition, δοκίμιον has only two occurrences in all the New Testament: at the beginning of these two epistles. Numerous other examples of quite similar wording and thought can be noted from the parallels given.

²Even if there is no direct dependency of I Peter on James, the case is strong that the latter has a more primitive tone throughout.

(1:10) ὁ δὲ πλούσιος . . . ὥς
ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται.

. . . καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ
ἐξέπεσεν

(1:14) ἕκαστος δὲ πειράζεται
ὑπο τῆς ίδίας ἐπιθυμίας

(1:17) . . . πᾶν δώρημα
τέλειον ἄνωθέν ἐστίν,
καταβαῖνον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς
τῶν φώτων

(1:18) βουληθεῖς ἀπεκύησεν
ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας,
εἰς τὸ εἶναι
ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν τινα τῶν
αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων

(1:21) διὸ ἀποθέμενοι πᾶσαν
ῥυπαρίαν καὶ περισσεΐαν
κακίας ἐν πραύτητι
δέξασθε τὸν ἐμφυτον λόγον

(2:7) τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα τὸ
ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς

(3:13) δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς
καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς
τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ

(4:1) . . . ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν
ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων

(1:24) πᾶσα σὰρξ ὥς
χόρτος, . . . ὥς

ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη
ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος
ἐξέπεσεν . . .

(1:14) μὴ συσχηματιζόμενοι
ταῖς πρότερον ἐν τῇ
ἀγνοίᾳ ὑμῶν ἐπιθυμίαις

(1:17) καὶ εἰ πατέρα
ἐπικαλεῖσθε

(1:23) ἀναγεγεννημένοι
. . . διὰ λόγου ζῶντος
θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος·

(4:19) ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες
κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ
πιστῶ κτίστη. . . .

(2:1) Ἀποθέμενοι οὖν
πᾶσαν κακίαν. . . .

(4:16) ὥς Χριστιανός, . . .
ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ

(2:12) τὴν ἀναστροφὴν ὑμῶν
ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἔχοντες
καλὴν . . . τῶν καλῶν
ἔργων

(2:11) ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν
σαρκικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν,

ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν; <u>ἐπιθυμεῖτε</u> . . .	αἵτινες <u>στρατεύονται</u> κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς.
(4:6) Ὁ <u>θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους</u> <u>ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς</u> <u>δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.</u>	(5:5) Ὁ <u>θεὸς ὑπερηφάνους</u> <u>ἀντιτάσσεται, ταπεινοῖς</u> <u>δὲ δίδωσιν χάριν.</u>
(4:7a) ὑποτάγητε <u>οὖν τῷ θεῷ</u>	(5:6a) Ταπεινώθητε <u>οὖν ὑπὸ</u> <u>τὴν κραταίαν χεῖρα τοῦ</u> <u>θεοῦ</u>
(4:7b) <u>ἀντίστητε</u> δὲ τῷ <u>διαβόλῳ</u>	(5:8-9a) ὁ ἀντίδικος ὑμῶν <u>διάβολος</u> . . . ὃ <u>ἀντίστητε</u> <u>στερεοὶ τῇ πίστει</u>

Rendall¹ takes into account the environment--the times and conditions of trial and persecution--involved in the writing of the Epistle of James and says:

The assumption the author of the Epistle, with that of Peter under his eyes and borrowing from it words and phrases and quotations, ignored or turned his back upon the whole of this advance of theology in I Peter, denies to him all capacity of spiritual insight, and even, unless some fanciful environment is invented, of ethical force or virtue. Affirmations which at Jerusalem faced and met the risk of "martyrdom," if transferred to Asia or Italy, are reduced to the irresponsible utterances of an anonymous pamphleteer. As such they become of little moment, open to the charge of being even on the ethical side little more than an "epistle of straw."²

Within the space of five verses in each of the two epistles they both include the same quotation from Proverbs 3:32 (LXX): "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble;" and the command for humbling oneself in

¹Rendall, op. cit., pp. 96-100.

²Ibid., p. 100.

the sight of the Lord, and--remarkably--a command to resist the devil.¹

I Peter has a connection, not unlike that of James, with some of the epistles of Paul (especially with Romans and Ephesians).²

Parry says, again concerning I Peter, "The close logical coherence of passages in St. James is broken up, even while the elements appear."³ That is, a phrase or thought which occurs in James' epistle will be used in other connections, perhaps several times, in Peter's epistle.⁴

Schlatter examines and compares the form of the respective Old Testament quotations in the two epistles. He concludes rightly that Peter is far too careful and respectful of the Old Testament context to modify the original quotation, and so goes back to a more literal form of quotations; but he says, "Gleichartiger Gebrauch alttestamentlicher Sätze findet sich auch sonst, und er geht über den Apostelkreis in das Rabbinat hinüber."⁵

Schlatter suggests that the strongest evidence for the priority of James to I Peter, and the dependency of

¹Cf. Cadoux, op. cit., p. 38.

²Cf. R. Parry, A Discussion of the General Epistle of St. James (London: 1903), He says, "The writer of I Peter knew all these epistles well, and used them in the same way." (p. 70). Selwyn (op. cit., pp. 386ff, 407ff) includes also Colossians.

³Parry, op. cit., p. 69.

⁴For example, James' rather ambiguous phrase in 2:1 is quite possibly the basis for I Peter 4:13, 14, and 5:1, 4, and 10.

⁵Schlatter, Jakobus, p. 72.

the latter, is found not in argument but in a simple examination of the texts. After such an examination, he deduced a rationale for dependency.¹ It is not at all necessary to follow his reconstruction of the historical situation, but it cannot be said that his reasoning is unsound.

He speaks of the association of the Apostle Peter with James the brother of the Lord, and says:

Nachdem ihre persönliche gemeinschaft ein Ende gefunden hatte, bestand sie dadurch weiter, dass Petrus ein schriftliches Dokument von Jakobus besass. Ich kann nicht urteilen, dass am Verhältnis der beiden Briefe zueinander irgend etwas Dunkles, mit der geschichtlichen Lage Streitendes lafte. Das Urteil des Petrus über den Brief erklärt zugleich, warum er mit dem Ende der jüdischen Christenheit nicht verschwand, sondern in den Besitz der griechischen Kirche hinüberging.²

Thus, in Schlatter's opinion, the very preservation of the Epistle of James in the Church when it had been superseded, as it were, by Peter's letter, was due to the very use of the earlier epistle by Peter. The case for dependency between James and I Peter is not so clear-cut as to be convincing to all. Most recent commentators on I Peter have not conceded direct dependency.³ Selwyn, for example, proposes a series of sources which underlie both epistles, among them one compiled with persecution in view (and thus designated "P"); another, a "Christian Holiness Code" (B); and a source of catechetical teaching which he

¹Ibid., p. 73.

²Ibid.

³Cf. Ernest Best, New Century Bible: I Peter (London: Oliphants, 1971), p. 32. Cf. also Ropes, James, p. 22.

follows Carrington in calling "Catechumen Virtues" (CV) in a gnomic form (CVG).¹ He therefore doubts that there was any direct dependence between the two epistles, but rather a mutual dependence upon other sources.²

If there is no direct dependence between the two epistles, the numerous similarities may be accounted for by the use of similar sources, either written or oral, or by the fact that such ideas were "in the air" in the early Christian communities. It is difficult to account for the striking similarity of order in which so many similar topics are treated unless there was a common written source or direct dependence.³

The main point for our purpose is that there appears to be a striking correspondence between I Peter and James, that there is no significant development of doctrine in James beyond that in I Peter (but the reverse may be true), and that James may be more primitive, at least in theological tone. Though this does not in itself establish an early date for James it may be seen as somewhat supportive of the idea.

The possible relationships between the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew are discussed in later

¹Selwyn, op. cit., pp. 462f.

²He says, however, "If direct dependence exists, then I Peter is much more likely to be original than James." (Ibid., p. 463. Cf. also p. 19)

³Carrington points out that the chief catechetical material common to James, Ephesians, Colossians, and I Peter falls under four main topics and is treated in the same order in all four. P. Carrington, The Primitive Christian Catechism (Cambridge: the University Press, 1940), pp. 34f.

chapters, and for present purposes no conclusions can properly be based on them.

3. The State of the Converts, and the Sins Laid to Their Charge

The persons addressed in the Epistle apparently have many gross sins laid to their charge. This fact supposedly fixes the date of writing at a later time, when the love and earnestness of the Christians might have waned, and they had relapsed into worldly living. On the other hand, some have seen these references as an indication of early date: the Jewish Christians have brought with them vices which could be said to be typical of the rich, or of those who seek to become rich (avarice, respect of persons, low payment of employees, etc.).¹ This would necessitate a view of a very low degree of sanctification among these Jewish Christians (not greatly different, however, from that of the Corinthians--compare I Cor. 1:2 with I Cor. 3:1-3).

Two things must be noted here. First, it is certain that there is occasionally some exaggeration or hyperbole in statements of the writer, perhaps even akin to that of Jesus (Matthew 7:3f. with Lukan parallel). It is to be hoped, for example, that such is true of James 4:2, "You desire and do not have; so you kill."²

¹N. B.: Moffatt, *ILNT*, pp. 468f., answers the charge that these are the sins of Jewish converts by saying that these are not specifically Jewish vices, but those common to humanity.

²McNeile, for example, says, "Perhaps the word is used metaphorically." *op. cit.*, p. 205, n.2.

But the second consideration is this: the condemnation of the rich men, in 5:1-6, leads Williams to make an interesting observation about James' style.

It will be noticed that individual sections of the letter have been addressed to different groups. Thus 3:13-18 was addressed to the wise or clever; 4:1-10 to the quarrelsome and envious--the second person being used throughout most of the section, as though among the readers were murderers and brawlers; 4:13-17 . . . addressed directly to the over-confident businessmen. Now comes this section (5:1-6) addressed directly to those who have great possessions (verse 1).

The more closely this passage is examined the less likely it seems to be that the writer of James expected people of the type he condemns to be among actual Christian readers of his tract. It is surely more probably that he had the rhetorical habit of giving his moral teaching or rebuke in the second person. . . . Once this is seen and accepted, it is possible to see how a passage like this fits into the letter, and also how the writer could speak about murders and fights in 4:1-10 without necessarily implying that these things went on in the actual Christian community he was addressing.¹

Williams' mention of the example of prophetic use of the same second-person form (he gives as example Isaiah 28:14) recalls also Paul's use of a second-person condemnation of men who judge, yet are guilty of the very same things Romans 2:1; of those who have hard and impenitent hearts Romans 2:5; of thieves, adulterers, and temple-robbers Romans 2:21, 22).

The point to be made here is this: Ropes² and others³

¹R. R. Williams, The Letters of John and James (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965), p. 129f.

²Ropes, op. cit., pp. 12-17.

³E.g. Sidebottom, op. cit., p. 1; Blackman, op. cit., p. 7, and most other recent commentators.

recognize in the Epistle of James definite traces of the diatribe form, described in part as follows: "truncated dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor . . . and the brief question and answer. . . . by ἄγε which occurs in the passage at hand, 5:1".¹ The style of the writing must be taken into account in evaluating the suspected characteristics of the readers. Just as it is important to try to analyze their shortcomings as completely as possible, so it is important not to infer too much concerning the character of the readers.

Perhaps it is true that no help at all can be gained in establishing a date for the Epistle of James from the sins and evils which have been mentioned in the document. Just as they do not establish a late date, they can hardly be used to prove an early one: but the sum of the evidence allows for either possibility, or some time between.

4. The Problem of the Relationship of Faith and Works, as Compared with the Writings of Paul

For Kümmel the passage on faith and works is the decisive matter for choosing a late date for this letter. He speaks of the necessity of a late date for James because of its "doctrinal separation from Paul"² assuming

¹Ropes, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13. At the latter point, Ropes says that the style of 4:13-5:6 does not at all imply that the persons addressed were expected to be among the readers.

²Kümmel, *op. cit.*, p. 291. The quotation in its context is as follows: "The time of composition of James can hardly be determined more precisely than at the end of the first century. A much later dating is unfounded, for the

that misunderstanding Paul was difficult at an early date, but that some forty years later, when the written documents were assembled and widely circulated, his doctrines would be easier to misunderstand. Kümmel, however, makes a choice explanatory statement concerning the passage which is the latter half of James' second chapter: "this passage reveals . . . a complete ignorance of the polemic meaning of the Pauline theology."¹ He seeks to prove thereby that James of Jerusalem could not have been the author, but his evidence can equally support the earliest date, before the Jerusalem council; neither does it obviate the traditional authorship.

The argument of Ropes is better supported, and must be considered: "That James wrote after Paul's doctrine had become well known in the church must be admitted, for he quotes exactly Paul's formula . . . , and this formula was the outgrowth of the most original element of Paul's system and is alien to earlier Jewish thought."²

Ropes discusses the matter of whether James and Paul meant the same things by the terms "justification," "works," and "faith."³ He concludes that in each case the Pauline use of the corresponding term has a new element:

contention that James shows signs of the anti-Gnostic struggle (Schamberger, Schoeps), rests upon an exaggerated interpretation of certain Hellenistic formulations. But James cannot be dated earlier in view of its doctrinal separation from Paul."

¹Ibid.

²Ropes, op. cit., p. 35.

³Ibid.

on justification, Ropes says that Paul speaks of the initial moment of the Christian life, whereas James refers justification to the day of judgment.¹ In his use of works Ropes says that Paul would include the good conduct which James signifies.² But "works of the law" are another matter, designating requirements of ritual legalism. This legalism has no part at all in the use which James makes of the term. Considering James' sort of "faith," Ropes says:

James has no special "concept" of faith, but is talking of the act or state popularly called faith; it is not a question of definition, but of observation. If it be true that Paul would have denied the name of faith to the "dead" faith of which James speaks, that is because he had changed and enlarged the connotation, and so reduced the denotation, of the term.³

Thus Ropes incidentally appears to build a strong case

¹It is doubtful that Ropes has interpreted James' use of the term rightly here. One may seriously question, in addition, whether he has not too severely limited that of Paul.

²Ropes, loc. cit., Cf. A. Richardson, Int. Theol. of the NT, p. 240.

³Ropes, loc. cit. In fact what James signifies by works is the highest type of Christian moral and social responsibility, included by Paul under the category of "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22f.), and apparently included in the term "good works" in Ephesians 2:10. Moffatt says, "So far as the Christian praxis of religion is concerned, James and Paul are at one, but each lays emphasis on different syllables. The πίστις of Ja 2:14-26 is an acceptance of the divine νόμος as an impulse and standard of moral conduct; the caricature of it, which he denounces, is a belief which is divorced from good behaviour. Paul could never have used the term dead faith (2:26), although he had often in mind the same ethical fruitlessness which roused the indignation of James. Furthermore, what James calls έργα, Paul described as fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22); to Paul έργα are έργα νόμου, and over against them he sets πίστις." (Moffatt, ILNT, p. 465.)

for the theory that the writer of the Epistle of James never saw the letters of Paul (particularly Romans or Galatians); but what of the assertion that James had Paul's formula in mind when he wrote, and that he "quotes exactly Paul's formula"?¹ First of all, though there is remarkable similarity of expression, there is no exact quotation in the verses to which Ropes refers.

James 2:21

Ἀβραὰμ ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν
οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη,
ἀνενέγκας Ἰσαὰκ
τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ
τὸ θυσιαστήριον;

James 2:24

ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων
δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος
καὶ οὐχ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον.

Galatians 2:16

εἰδότες δὲ ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται
ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ
διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν
ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν
ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ
ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,
ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθή-
σεται πᾶσα σὰρξ.

Romans 3:28

λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι
πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων
νόμου.

It may readily be seen that among the chief similarities between the passages in question are the words in James (twice used) ἔργα, compared with Paul's phrase (four times repeated) ἔργα νόμου.² But the context in James

¹Ibid., p. 35.

²For further discussion on the faith-works "controversy," see *infra*. pp. 142 f.

makes it perfectly plain that there is no attempt to equate the works to which he refers with Paul's phrase "works of the law." The sense of the passages will not bear such comparison. Eduard Schweizer comments,

Wenn er freilich erklärt, ein Glaube ohne Werke sei tot, . . . denn hätte Paulus selbst es kaum viel anders sagen können. Paulus behauptet ja nie, der Glaube sei ohne Werke; er erklärt nur, er sei ohne Werke des Gesetzes; das heisst für ihn: ohne Werke, die das: Gesetz als Grund haben, die getan werden, nur weil das Gesetz sie so gebietet¹ und weil von ihrer Erfüllung Lohn zu erwarten ist.¹

Attempt to insert Paul's distinctive phrase ("works of the law") in James, and the result is nonsense. James would insist that the works he is talking about have nothing at all to do with the law to which Paul refers in Galatians 2 or Romans 3 (the works, of which James is speaking, are in fact works of mercy); nor does he ever use Paul's term "good" works. These are the works of faith, and they are the active response of a living faith--not a thought need be given to the works, just as a living body needs never give a thought to breathing.² But James does distinguish in terminology between faith, which for him is a belief in and acceptance of truth,³ and these works which are the high practical, ethical Christian response to that acceptance of truth. All that James means by

¹Eduard Schweizer, Jesus Christus; im vielfältigen Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments (München und Hamburg: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1968), p. 178.

²"For just as the body without breath is dead, so also faith without works is dead."

³As in his own example the devils are orthodox in their belief in truth about God. But James would say that such belief has no advantage.

faith and works together comprises what Paul meant when speaking of faith (alone), for Paul's term faith already implies a wholehearted response to truth. Thus Paul can say that Abraham was justified by his complete belief in God, while James says that Abraham's belief in God expressed itself in the obedience to God--faith plus works--and this combination is the basis upon which God pronounced him just.

As Bultmann points out, Paul is fond of using the diatribe form in his letters;¹ and his Epistle to the Romans in particular has this construction. In the passage in Romans which has most to do with the subject of faith and works Paul utilizes this method of argument in reply to an objection which is assumed but not stated. Gaugler² and Jeremias³ call attention to Paul's consistent argument against objections which were commonly made in regard to the Christian position. Both authors cite Romans 4:1 as one example. In this passage Paul is concerned with establishing the basis of the justification of Abraham on faith apart from works, in opposition to the Rabbinic thesis, expressed by Billerbeck, that

Abraham ist ausschliesslich auf Grund seiner Werke für Gerech anerkannt worden, u. darum hat er grossen

¹Rudolph Bultmann, Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910), p. 107, passim.

²Ernst Gaugler, Der Römerbrief (1. Teil: Kapitel 1-8) (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1945), p. 342.

³Joachim Jeremias, "Zur Gedanken führung in den Paulinischen Briefen" Studia Paulina (Haarlem, 1953), p. 146.

Ruhm nicht bloss bei Menschen, sondern auch bei Gott. Wenn aber die Schrift sagt: Abraham glaubte Gott, u. das rechnete er ihm zu Gerechtigkeit an, so ist der Glaube genau so als ein verdienstliches Werk anzusehen wie irgendeine andre Gebotserfüllung.¹

Leaving aside for the present the question of the relative merit of Paul's position and that of James, it may be asserted that James' position is not contradictory to that common in Judaism contemporary with him.² Schoeps recognizes this:

Likewise the Letter of James--James drew on the same Jewish sources as Paul--with its tendency to combine the two factors faith and works in contrast to Paul, represents contemporary Jewish opinion,³ which no doubt prevailed in the Jerusalem church.

In dealing with the possibility of dependency of James on Paul (or of Paul on James) Meyer says:

die Beweisführung und Schriftauffassung von Jac 2:21-25 jüdischer und vorpaulinischer Herkunft ist. . . . Dass Jac nicht gegen Paulus, sondern gegen tote Orthodoxie kämpft, ist auf der positiven Seite richtig erkannt worden; aber das die nahe Beziehung zwischen Jac and Paulus sich aus ihrer gemeinsamen jüdischen Schule erklärt, ist nicht genügend in Betracht gezogen worden. Dadurch wird auch das Wagnis Paulus von Jac bestimmt sein zu lassen, unnötig; gegeben ist damit aber, was die kritische Schule bestreitet und die Verteidiger

¹Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (dritter Band; zweite Auflage: München, 1945), p. 186.

²O. Michel "Paulus and seine Bibel" Beiträge zur Forderung christlicher Theologie, II 18 (1929), says that Paul's argument in Romans 4 is posed against the "synagogal" concept that Abraham was justified by his works. If Michel is correct in his understanding of this concept's currency in first-century Judaism, we need look no further for a source from which both Paul and James took the concepts they use in such different ways.

³H. J. Schoeps, Paul: the Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), pp. 202f.

der Echtheit nicht überzeugend genug dargetan haben, dass Gedanken und Worte des JB's ursprünglicher sind als die des Paulus. Ja¹ hat die alte Tradition, Paulus ist der Neuerer.

Thus neither the similarity of expression between James and Paul, nor the "doctrinal separation" which is seen to exist between the two, forces a late dating upon the origin of the Epistle of James. In fact, Kittel asserts that James' juxtaposition of faith and works necessitates the conclusion that the Epistle of James was written against the background of distortions of Paul's theology; yet he also is able to assert that this, instead of over-ruling, rather establishes an early date.²

5. The Absence of Reference to the Jewish-Gentile Controversy

In the Epistle of James there is no reference at all to the great Jewish-Gentile controversy of the middle of the first century. This is another of the vexing arguments from silence, and so again caution is required. Yet from a modern vantage point it seems difficult to imagine that if the letter had been written during the period of the heat of controversy or in the few years immediately following, some hint of the subject would not appear. Several possibilities then must be allowed: either (1) the epistle was written before the controversy arose or became a pressing issue (thus before A.D. 48); or (2) the date of the epistle is after the issue became settled, possibly by

¹A. Meyer, op. cit., pp. 107f.

²Kittel, "Geschichtliche Ort . . . ," pp. 94-102.

A.D. 54 or 55; or as a much less probable alternative, the epistle may have belonged to the time of controversy but its original readers were localized in a place outside the areas involved in the controversy.¹ In any case nothing can be proved about the date of the letter of James from this omission.

6. The Lack of Any Reference to the Fall of Jerusalem or of Conflict with Rome

Again, it is necessary to deal with a minor problem which takes the form of an omission. There is in the epistle no evidence of the conflict with Rome which occupied the minds of many Palestinians during the decade following A.D. 60.² And there is no reference to the fall of Jerusalem. But this silence would only be expected to rule out a date of writing between about the years 65 and 80, if indeed the silence on the issue is not otherwise explainable. Again at least the early and the later dates proposed for the Epistle of James are consonant with the internal evidence (or, in this case, the lack of it).

7. The Apparently Primitive Church Order

In the epistle the only church officials mentioned are

¹Thus, neither in Jerusalem nor in a place which had both Jews and Gentiles--but in an area completely Jewish or Gentile. Such places would be extremely rare, even in Palestine.

²But, in fact, some commentators see in the warnings of impending judgment (5:1, 9. Cf. also 4:13-15, which may be seen as an expression of foreboding) a prediction of Jerusalem's fall.

"elders" (5:14)¹ and "teachers" (3:1). This specific exclusive mention of two very primitive offices would be puzzling if the letter were written very late--even late in the first century. Those who suggest a late date for the Epistle are forced to unusual assumptions to explain this,² or they ignore it altogether.³ One should not make too much of these references, because both offices continued in the Church; and because there is no mention of deacons, who were early officers at least in Jerusalem. But the inclusion of the offices tends to support an early date rather than a later one.

8. The Evident Jewish References

Abundant in the epistle are references to the concepts and ideas of late Judaism.⁴ One of the prime examples of this is the writer's reference to the "whole law," with the stern rebuke to one who may have felt that failure in small points of law was a negligible omission (2:10, 11).

¹Tasker, op. cit., p. 61, says, "a typically Jewish title, though the word was used among Gentiles of civic and religious officials. Both synagogue and early Church were governed by elders (cf. I Peter 5:1-5; Acts 5:6, 10)."

²For example: the geographical location of the writer, and perhaps the readers, must have been isolated from the rest of Christendom (Moffatt, ILNT, p. 464 n.d. Moffatt deduces this from the one single reference in Eusebius, H.E. vii, 24:6, which itself belongs within the context of vii, 24:1-9. This same chapter does mention bishops, that there were a number of churches--an "order"--so organized, late in the time of the fathers.)

³E.g. Ropes, op. cit., p. 304, where one might have expected such a reference. McNeile, op. cit., also omits discussion of this.

⁴Ropes, op. cit., pp. 28-33, enumerates many of these ideas and customs.

It is every reader's duty to observe God's law strictly (1:21-25; 4:11). The one who perseveres in the law of God is blessed.

The citation of the shema, the orthodox creed that God is one (2:19) is another strongly Jewish element. The references to the synagogue (2:2) and to the Lord Sabaoth (5:4) are two more. Some scholars (e.g. Rendall¹ and Ropes²) understand by "the glory" (2:1) a reference to the Shekinah of the Old Testament.

Other Jewish elements are listed by Cadoux.³ What can be concluded from them? (1) Although the mere conclusion that the author was a Jewish Christian would not in itself greatly help to narrow the date, if Daniélou is correct in supposing that there was a continuation of Jewish Christianity beyond A.D. 70, yet the fact that he was a Christian evidently converted from Judaism swings the balance of probability to an earlier date. (2) The reference to the Christian assembly as "synagogue" also points to an early date--perhaps very early before the paths of the Christians and the devout Jews had parted widely in practice and worship.

9. The Presence of Some Persecution

The references to trials and persecution in the epistle (1:2-4, 12; 2:6, etc.) may seem to point to some

¹Rendall, op. cit., pp. 90f.

²Ropes, op. cit., p. 187.

³Cadoux, op. cit., pp. 10-18.

late date: for example, during the persecutions of Domitian or Trajan. But in fact, an examination of the references requires no more than circumstances which were common in Jerusalem after Pentecost or following the death of Stephen.¹ The only specific persecution from the outside which is actually mentioned is the oppression by the rich, and the statement that the rich were the ones who "drag you into court." (2:6). All the other trials are of a general nature, though perhaps they are associated with this same sort of oppression. It is evident that little help in dating the epistle can be derived from the references to trials and persecutions, since the persecutions do not seem to be severe, being described in quite general terms, and such conditions almost certainly recurred with some frequency in the primitive church.²

10. The Absence of Christology

There is an obvious lack of Christology in the Epistle of James. For this reason (without concluding that it was not written by the Lord's brother) Luther affirmed that it is not "apostolic." He explained by saying:

Was Christum nicht leret, das ist nicht Apostolisch,
wens gleich Petrus odder Paulus leret, Widerumb, was
Christum predigt, das ist Apostolisch, wens gleich

¹Cf. Guthrie, Hebrews to Revelation, p. 87.

²Cf. Selwyn, op. cit., p. 461. A source underlying a number of epistles which was "compiled with persecution in view" has been proposed: Selwyn suggests that it may have been based on verba Christi. This would certainly account for all references to persecution except the reference to the oppression by the rich in 2:6 and the similar reference in 5:6.

Judas, Annas, Pilatus und Herodes thett. [sic]."¹

The lack of Christological content was briefly mentioned above.² The theories of Spitta and Meyer³ rest largely on this omission, as does the theory of Moulton,⁴ amplified by Rendall,⁵ that the epistle was written to devout non-Christian Jews by the Christian James, and that it was meant as an evangelistic or "pre-evangelistic" document, to lead them eventually to embrace Christianity.

Ropes points out the references to Christ:

As with Paul, it is not easy to be sure when "the Lord" refers to God and when to Christ, but the writer bids his readers to continue in the hope of "the coming of the Lord," evidently meaning Christ. . . . The fair name which they bear and which is blasphemed by the rich who oppress them (2:7) is undoubtedly that of Christ, and it is probably in his name (5:14) that the elders anointed the sick with oil. Jesus, then, is the Messiah, and is Lord; he abides in divine glory, and will come to judge all men and save those who love God.

Beyond these it is difficult to find any sort of Christology as generally conceived.

What rationale can there have been behind the writing

¹Luther, "Vorrhede auff die Episteln Sanct Jacobi unnd Judas," New Testament. Weimar edition. 1931.

²Supra, p. 26.

³Spitta, op. cit., passim, and Meyer, op. cit., pp. 176-304. Both are well-known for their individual variations of the theory of non-Christian Jewish origin of the Epistle of James.

⁴J. H. Moulton, "Synoptic Studies II: The Epistle of James and the Sayings of Jesus," The Expositor, 7th series, Vol. IV, pp. 45-55.

⁵Rendall, op. cit., pp. 88-95.

⁶Ropes, op. cit., p. 32.

of the epistle, which would make it desirable or necessary to omit explicit reference to Jesus? At this point the question cannot be adequately answered, but Schlatter speaks in terms of the importance of the parousia by way of contrast.

Was die Jünger Jesus Jerusalem sagten, war: der Christus kommt. Ihre Botschaft war Eschatologie. Das ergibt sich auch aus dem Brief des Jakobus mit unzweideutiger Bestimmtheit. Er kan Christlichen Unterricht geben, ohne zu erzählen, was Jesus getan hat, ohne die Hörer zum Kreuz Jesus zu Führen, ohne ihnen seine Auferstehung zu bezeugen: sie haben das sie rettende Wort gehört. Aber vom kommenden Christus muss er reden. Christliche lehre,¹ die nicht vom kommenden sprache, gibt es nicht.

Above it has been stated that there is little by way of "Christology, as generally conceived." But on the other hand it may justly be maintained that what might have been said christologically in James takes the form, not of statements about Jesus, but of references to and questions of, his teaching.² There are many references to the sayings of Jesus in the writing.³

To fault the Epistle for not telling of the great events of the life of Christ and for not amplifying and interpreting those events (Christologically) may be inadequate criticism, if the great similarities between the tradition of the words of Jesus and the exhortations of James are not cited in balance. In any case, though, in

¹Schlatter, op. cit., pp. 36, 37.

²Cf. the list of references supra.

³Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort. . .," op. cit., pp. 84, 85, enumerates twenty-six such references, and subjects them to examination. A number of these references will be examined in chapter ten, infra.

this area the Epistle shows no particular "late" evidence: the references to Jesus' teaching are demonstrably not culled from the existing Gospel accounts. There is no easily imagined literary association.¹ It is possible, in fact, that James' source for these sayings is as early as that for the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels.

11. The Presence of a Vital Eschatology

Schlatter, in his passage cited above, referred to the importance of eschatology for the writer of the Epistle of James. A great number of elements of the Christian message are indeed omitted from the Epistle; but eschatology is necessary to the ideas which James must share. In this he is at one with other New Testament writers.

The question must be considered, however, of what sort is his eschatology? Is it not merely Jewish expectation, of the sort which had been common since the days of Isaiah (22:5, 25) and Jeremiah (46:10, 21), i.e., "the day of the Lord will come?"² Oesterley points out that in 5:1-6 the eschatological expectation fits within the normal Jewish pattern; but that the emphasis from 5:7 on is specifically Christian.³

¹Cf. chapter ten, which shows the parallels in Greek.

²The phrase *ἡμέρα σφαγῆς* (5:5) may indeed have been derived from Jeremiah 12:3, "ἀγνίσον αὐτοὺς εἰς ἡμέραν σφαγῆς αὐτῶν." Jeremiah's words are not found within a generally eschatological passage, nor is it a "word of the Lord," but a plea for the Lord to judge the prospering hypocrites.

³W. O. E. Oesterly, The General Epistle of James: The Expositor's Greek Testament (London: 1910). Cited by Cadoux, op. cit., p. 15.

The παρουσία τοῦ κυρίου does not appear at all in the Old Testament or in the apocryphal literature. Oepke says that the concept, in reference to the coming of Christ in Messianic glory, "seems to have made its way into primitive Christianity with Paul."¹ In fact, the occurrences in Matthew 24 (3, 27, 37, 39) are the only New Testament use of the term outside of the epistles. One may presume on the basis of this evidence that the eschatology of James is more than merely a continuation of Jewish expectation.

There is more to be said concerning the eschatology in the Epistle of James. The phrase "crown of life" (1:12) is especially noteworthy. Paul uses the imagery of the crown or garland (e.g. I Cor. 9:25, II Tim. 4:8), but never as a crown of life: his concept is aimed in a slightly different direction, although in both of those passages the concept of patient endurance is foremost, as it is here. There it is an imperishable crown, and a crown of righteousness; here, of life.

In I Peter the "unfading crown of glory" is the eschatological reward for the elders who modestly and humbly lead the flock of God from pure motives.

It has been suggested that James has included here an authentic "lost" saying of Jesus.² Such a theory is not impossible, and may be supported by the message in the

¹Oepke, "παρουσία," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Kittel and G. Fredrich, ed. and trans. by G. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), V, p. 865.

²Sidebottom, op. cit., p. 29. Cf. Ropes, op. cit., p. 153.

words of Jesus to the church at Smyrna: ". . . you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). However, it is also likely that the very concept of a garland for the victor was current in nearly all New Testament preaching, inasmuch as it is found in such diverse sources (Jacobean, Pauline, Petrine, The Apocalypse) within the New Testament. A crown, or wreath, was not reserved for royalty, and was not specifically a "symbol of dominion." Often it was bestowed, not for accomplishment, but merely as a sign of favour,¹ as by a king to his friends.

If Sidebottom is correct in his suggestion that James reproduces here an authentic word of Jesus, that would go far toward explaining the many other New Testament references to crowns bestowed. In any case, James is squarely in the middle of the tradition of the primitive church in his statement, and not in the line of Jewish eschatology. Yet his eschatology is not demonstrably based on other early Christian documents.

More will be said on the matter of the eschatology of the Epistle of James in a later chapter. Let it suffice to say at this point that in view of the general Christian flavor of the epistle it is difficult to believe that the parousia of the Lord could be conceived to be Jewish eschatology.² Kittel says on this subject, "Die Endzeit steht

¹Ropes, op. cit., pp. 151f.

²W. O. E. Oesterly, The Doctrine of the Last Things: Jewish and Christian (London: 1908), indicates his view that eschatology was perceived in an incomplete form by

nicht bloss vor der Tür, sondern ist schon mitten im Anbruch."¹

12. The Pattern of Ethical Material Which Permeates the Epistle

New Testament epistles, almost by definition, contain much in the way of ethical teaching. The normal pattern (deduced mainly from the Pauline standard) is to have a section which is "doctrinal," followed by the "practical," (or ethical, hortatory, or parenetic) instruction.

The Epistle of James is unusual in that it slights the doctrinal portion (inserting doctrine occasionally but not in any systematic way). Its emphasis is strongly practical and ethical.

Dibelius has suggested that the loose construction in James and the grouping of sayings² indicates an origin common with other early Christian hortatory instruction.

There seems to be a remarkable uniformity of style within the parenetic sections of the New Testament.³

faithful Jews in the times preceding Christ's coming; but that incompleteness meant neither that Christian eschatology was a mere copy of the Jewish, nor that Christian eschatology should not utilize and advance the skeleton which preceded it. (passim).

¹Kittel, "Geschichtliche Ort. . . ," p. 83.

²M. Dibelius, "Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments," Theologische Rundschau, (N.F. 3, 1931), p. 216.

³Such uniformity, of course, may be partly explained by (1) a relatively great amount of agreement as to the things enjoined and the things prohibited for Christians; (2) the frequency of the imperative mood in hortatory writing--James has 54 imperatives in 108 verses; and (3) the common oral source for much Christian teaching, stem-

Dodd refers to this similarity, and gives three examples of parenetic material by three different writers of New Testament documents. The examples are passages from I Thessalonians (5:14-18), Hebrews (13:1-3), and I Peter (3:8-9). Dodd says:

It would, I think, puzzle even a person well read in the New Testament to say, on grounds of style alone, to what authors these extracts are to be assigned. . . . It is . . . likely that each of these writers was unconsciously influenced by the ring and run of familiar forms of ethical instruction in the church.¹

He is not thinking of reproduction of an existing document, nor quotation of an established oral form, but "an accepted pattern of teaching which goes back to a very early period indeed."²

Dodd thus follows Dibelius' view that the parenetic material had a tendency to retain its own form in an epistle, regardless of the style of the writer. But Dibelius goes further, and speaks of parenesis which the author does not shape,³ but which is taken over from its source into New Testament documents. Bornkamm says, "that more than other epistles, that of James largely takes over ethical instruction without changing it or adding Christ-

ming from Jesus himself through the apostles and the primitive Christian community.

¹C. H. Dodd, Gospel and Law (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), p. 19, n.l.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Dibelius, op. cit., p. 209, in speaking of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But he goes on to say, ". . . sondern ubernommen ist und gelegentlich kommentiert wird (am deutlichsten in 13:10-15)."

ian content."¹

Dodd also points out (and holds it to be "conclusive evidence that all are following some common model") that the New Testament passages which have such material also use a peculiar construction: instead of the expected imperative, there is consistent use of participial construction. This usage is not found in other parts of the New Testament documents.²

But it is notable that this grammatical construction is absent from the Epistle of James.³ And it is noteworthy that Dodd omits the Epistle of James from his examples of documents (and writers) using the common model which he suggests. It may be suggested with some justification, therefore, that James stands outside the general tradition of ethical material. Could it not be that he stands in time before its Christian absorption and reformation?

Hort, in his masterful but incomplete commentary on the Epistle of James, says of the epistle: "The style is especially remarkable for constant hidden allusions to our Lord's sayings, such as we find in the first three Gospels."⁴

¹G. Bornkamm, "Formen und Gattungen," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, (Dritte Auflage: Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), II, Cols. 1, pp. 1004, 1005.

²Dodd, op. cit., p. 19, n. 3.

³Cf. Mayor, op. cit., pp. ccxxxi, f., and ccxl-cclix, for his very thorough examination of the grammar. Cf. also Schlatter, op. cit., pp. 77-84.

⁴F. J. A. Hort, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan & Co., 1909), p. xxxiii.

In relation to this as well as the section immediately above, Dibelius says that in any history of parenesis the words of the Lord must be considered, because it is probable that the majority of them were put together and absorbed into parenetic tradition.¹ Schlatter, likewise, says:

Nun war es der Beruf der Jünger, solange ihnen noch Frist gegeben war, unermüdlich das zu lehren, was der Herr gelehrt hatte. Dieser Notwendigkeit, die im Verhältnis der Jünger zu Jesus fest begründet war, entspricht der Brief völlig, nicht nur dadurch, dass Jakobus die Sentenz zu seinem Lehrmittel macht, wie auch Jesus getan hatte, sondern auch durch den Gehalt der Sprüche, durch die Ziele, auf die er seinen ganzen Unterricht eingestellt hat.²

After a brief examination of the teaching of Jesus which he discovers in the Epistle of James, Schlatter, in summing up says:

Damit ist die Lehre Jesu vollständig wiedergegeben. Aber auch das Verhältnis [ratio, proportion] in dem die Lehre Jesu zu seiner Botschaft, die διδασχὴ zum κήρυγμα, stand verändert sich bei Jakobus nicht.³

If Schlatter is correct in this judgment, it would be remarkable that such a proximity to the spirit and intent of Jesus could be accompanied by a late date for the Epistle of James.

The ethical content of the epistle, including as it does much of the same kind of teaching as the first three

¹Dibelius, op. cit., p. 217.

²Schlatter, op. cit., p. 10.

³Ibid., pp. 14, 15. Cf. in this regard the evidence which Schlatter cites with some detail in the same work, pp. 9-19.

Gospels attribute to Jesus himself,¹ appears to be very early. There appears to have been little of the "catechetical" development of the teaching of Jesus into a patterned tradition used in the writing of the epistle. James does not fit the pattern of early catechetical works as it is described by some scholars.² This may merely be a sign of a tradition of ethical teaching which is largely independent of the catechetical pattern, or it may also signify that this epistle or its sources should be assigned an early date.

13. The Kind and Degree of Ethical Teaching

There is much Hellenistic teaching in the epistle,³ and much founded upon the sayings of the rabbis.⁴ But again it must be said that the teaching of the Epistle

¹It will be shown in a later chapter that it is virtually impossible that the writer of the Epistle of James could have derived his content from the Gospels. The fact that the writer himself never attributes his teaching to Jesus (or to anyone else) also will be discussed.

²David Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (London: 1956), p. 344, says that one part of the pattern of catechetical works was to begin with a rejoicing over trials. Cf. Dodd, Gospel and Law, pp. 20f., where the fuller pattern is developed: (1) put off vices; (2) put on virtues; (3) human family emphasized, then larger Christian "family"; (4) Christian's actions toward outsiders; (5) obedience to authority; and (6) watchfulness because of the time. Because this largely covers the general field of Christian ethics, all ethical teaching in a Christian framework must have some points of comparison with this list: but James has little enough correspondence with the pattern as a whole.

³Massey Shepherd, "The Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew," Journal of Biblical Literature. LXXV (1956), p. 40.

⁴Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., passim.

has its roots in the radical teaching of Jesus. The command of the Lord is both startling and radical: "Be perfect" (Matthew 5:48).¹ But this word of the Lord appears again in James (1:4): "that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

The ethics of the epistle are based upon faith toward God (1:26, 27; 2:14, 15), love (2:5; 5:19), and humility (1:9, 10; 4:7, 10). They hold forth a high humanitarian ideal, with a great deal of encouragement for a people in the midst of actual or potential persecution. But this is a people still seen as responsible, both as witnesses of the truth of Christian faith, and as servants of a holy God. There is no compromise with the weakness of the human will, and no room for doubt. Steadfastness is demanded--no, it is expected. For the last days are present, and the Judge stands at the doors.

¹This "Q" saying is found in Luke 6:36 in the words, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." Which is the more likely to have been original, Matthew's τέλειος, or Luke's οἰκτιρῶν? Matthew Black, on the basis of a Semitic word-play (sh^elam, sh^elim), concludes, "In view of the word-play in Matthew . . . it seems more probable that the first Gospel has preserved the original form of the saying as spoken by Jesus . . . and that it is to the influence of the Targumic form of the words that the Lucan variant is due" (Black, op. cit., p. 181). Frank W. Beare also concludes the originality of the Matthean reading: ". . . it seems likely that Matthew's word 'perfect' . . . is a literal rendering of the underlying Aramaic used by Jesus; while Luke, realizing that his Gentile readers would hardly understand the word in its familiar Semetic sense, has interpreted it as 'merciful,' at the cost of a considerable narrowing of its meaning. (Beare, The Earliest Records of James (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962, p. 60). Though the possibility exists that the Lucan reading is original, I judge that the more radical as well as the more Semitic reading--that of Matthew--is, in the balance of probability, original.

From what has been observed in the foregoing chapter, the following conclusions may be drawn.

(1) The strongest evidence against the authorship of the Epistle of James by James the Lord's brother is the long period of silence concerning the epistle in the second century, and the doubts which Eusebius said others had concerning its authenticity. The force of this argument is partly mitigated, however, by the fact that Eusebius himself cited the epistle as genuine; and also by the epistle's lack of formulated Christology, which would make the epistle less attractive during the debates of the second century.

(2) At this point in the progress of New Testament scholarship there can be little said concerning the date and authorship that might be based upon the facility which the epistle shows with regard to the Greek language. The Greek is not perfect, nor does it approach the quality of classical Greek: but it is good. The authorship by the Lord's brother is not seriously challenged on this score, since if personal application to the study of Greek--one of the three commonly used languages of James' time and location--would not answer the problem, the use of an amanuensis would do so.¹

¹The idea of an amanuensis having recorded these words in James is not necessary to the argument, but on the other hand, is not incompatible with it. In no case is it necessary to see exact wording by James of the teaching of Jesus--what is found may be more properly termed echoes of the Lord's teaching. In no case is there precise correspondence in James and in Matthew for more than a few words consecutively.

(3) The epistle's omission of the example of Jesus, or of references to his life, is difficult to understand, whether the supposed author is the leader of the church in Jerusalem, or any other Christian in the first two centuries of the Christian era. However, an examination of the content reveals a great deal of the instruction of the Lord, woven into the message of the epistle. This must be taken into account in evaluation both of authorship and of the theology of the epistle.

(4) It is often asserted that the passage on faith and works in James 2:14f. presupposes familiarity with the writings of Paul. We have attempted to show on grounds of textual and linguistic evidence, from Rabbinic citation, and from stylistic and theological evidence cited by Bultmann and Meyer, that the theology of James is a logical development of one line of rabbinic interpretation, independent of Paul's formulation. However the suggestion of Gerhard Kittel, that James wrote to correct a very early misinterpretation of Paul's message before it was committed to writing, bears further scrutiny.

(5) The epistle is clearly Jewish-Christian, and almost certainly Palestinian, in origin.

(6) There are certain definite similarities between the Epistle of James and the speech and letter of James recorded in Acts 15, which tend to support the theory that the epistle's author is James of Jerusalem, the Lord's brother.

(7) A theory of pseudonymous authorship does not suit

the evidence which the Epistle of James presents: particularly regarding the lack of emphasis on the authority and position of the person named as writer. The obvious intent of the superscription is to present the Lord's brother as writer.

Those who favour the pseudonymous explanation must be able to provide an explanation why James of Jerusalem seemed a better choice than either of the two apostles of that name.¹

(8) The authority which is assumed in a wholly natural way within the epistle is consistent with what is otherwise known of the Lord's brother. The contents of the letter likewise do not at all contradict this knowledge.

(9) None of the matters discussed in regard to the date of the epistle overrules an early date: on the other hand, several of them readily support a date not later than A.D. 62, and possibly even 50 (e.g. the priority of the epistle to the First Epistle of Peter; the apparently primitive church order; the vital eschatology; and the similarities to Jesus' teaching).

Accordingly there is much to be said for the view that the Epistle of James was written by the president of the church in Jerusalem, as a person who was held in high regard among Jewish Christians. There is no other theory which is a strong contender for acceptance--only a multitude of suggestions by scholars who reject the view expressed above.

Much German scholarship presupposes the inauthenticity of the epistle, largely because of Luther's well-known

¹Mitton, op. cit., p. 229.

dislike of it. Therefore, it has largely been ignored in Germany. But there is a line of German scholars of note, from Huther and Zahn to Schlatter and Kittel, who have examined the evidence at their disposal and have concluded that the epistle has merit as one of the earliest of our Christian documents. If that view is correct, as the foregoing discussion suggests it may be, then the Epistle of James becomes a new resource for information not only on primitive Christian teaching, but for the teachings of Jesus himself.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT STATE OF STUDIES CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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For some eighteen hundred years after Christ the theory was largely unchallenged that the Gospel according to Matthew was the earliest Biblical record of the life of Jesus. Although it, in common with the other three canonical Gospels, is anonymous, strong and relatively early tradition ascribed it to Matthew. The earliest form of a Matthean tradition is the statement of Papias (c. 125) cited by Eusebius:¹ "Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language and each interpreted them as best he could."

The assumption, without the accompaniment of critical examination, would be that the Apostle Matthew had collected information and had written his Gospel in Hebrew (i.e. probably Aramaic). The Gospel of Matthew which we have would then be one of these interpretations--in translation Greek.² This view held the field for many centuries. Only in the past 150 years has there been strong conten-

¹Eusebius, H. E. III, xxxix, 16 (Lake's translation is used in this and other references to Eusebius).

²C. C. Torrey, The Four Gospels: A New Translation (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), p. ix ff., and Our Translated Gospels (London: Hodder & Stoughton, n.d.), p. liv. f., et passim, maintained that all four Gospels were translated into Greek from Aramaic originals. However, his conclusions have not found general acceptance.

tion against this view; but that on very serious grounds.

First, the Gospel as we have it can hardly be a translation. Matthew Black indicates that outside of an Aramaic sayings-source which underlies all the synoptic Gospels, "the only other place where evidence could be adduced of Aramaic influence of an extent . . . was in the Marcan narrative or in non-dominical sayings and dialogue."¹

The second objection is the theory of Marcan priority, accepted as virtually certain by nearly all modern interpreters.² The idea that the Gospel of Mark is an abridgement of Matthew³ is not acceptable. Rather, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, which together reproduce nine-tenths of the verses of Mark, are seen as later works utilizing the earliest Gospel, Mark. It is considered virtually impossible that an apostolic eyewitness should make such use of the account written by one who was neither an apostle nor an eyewitness.⁴

If the work of which Papias spoke is not an Aramaic form of canonical Matthew, only three possibilities remain: (1) the writing which he attributes to Matthew is Q or some

¹Matthew Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, 3d ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 271.

²Notable scholars who disagree with this point are W. R. Farmer, Dom Bernard D. Butler, and Léon Vaganay (cf. infra pp. 73f.).

³Advanced by Augustine, (De Cons. Ev., i), and generally accepted until relatively modern times.

⁴Cf. Kümmel, Introduction, p. 85. The term "eyewitness" would only require minor modification in the event that the writer of the Gospel of Mark was indeed the "young man" of 14:51, 52.

other source used for the Gospel of Matthew; (2) the writing of which he spoke has become lost, leaving no trace--or if it is known to us its ascription has been dropped; (3) Papias was mistaken in his information.

Although T. W. Manson was convinced that the oracles which were the subject of Papias' statement actually were the document Q,¹ this view is open to debate,² for there is still the language problem: M. Black's conclusion is that two major Aramaic traces in the synoptics may be discerned: first a source of sayings which underlies all three of the synoptics, and second in Marcan narrative-- non-dominical sayings and dialogue.³

J. Munck has concluded that the logia must be statements about Jesus--including both his words and acts. Therefore, he concludes that Papias meant to designate the canonical Matthew.⁴

¹T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1949), pp. 18ff. Cf. also T. W. Manson, "The Life of Jesus: A Survey of the Available Material (4) The Gospel of Matthew" Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 29 (1946), pp. 392-428.

²Cf. for example, Austin Farrer, "On Dispensing with Q," Studies in the Gospels, ed. D. E. Nineham. R. M. Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament (London: Collins, 1963), says, "Some scholars simply confused the issue by identifying Q with the 'oracles' . . . and saying that Matthew compiled 'sayings of Jesus;' but Papias' word 'logia' is not the same as 'logoi', 'sayings'." p. 117.

³Black, loc. cit.

⁴J. Munck, "Presbyters and Disciples of the Lord in Papias," Harvard Theological Review, 52 (1959), p. 228. His conclusions are based on the use of the term "logia" but P. Parker, The Gospel Before Mark (Chicago: 1953), cautions against too much emphasis being placed on any single interpretation of the word. He cites three distinct uses (p. 151).

Kümmel is convinced that Papias was simply wrong.¹

But others leave the question open. Perhaps a reasonable summary is that of R.M. Grant:

From Papias, then we derive some information, possibly correct, about the origin of Mark's gospel and of some of the materials in Matthew. The trouble with this information lies in our own inability to assess it properly. How reliable was Papias? How reliable were his informants? The only way we can tell is to check what he says with the gospels themselves and to see to what extent our analysis confirms his statement.²

Another suggestion made by Grant is interesting, in connection with the Papias Matthew tradition. Grant says that it is possible that Matthew had already written something like a gospel (Papias' compilation of 'dominical oracles'?) and "then revised it completely by incorporating Mark in it."³ This suggestion would have the unique advantage of providing for Marcan priority and at the same time for a special sort of Matthean originality.⁴

Again, in the matter of the ancient tradition concerning the origin of the Gospel of Matthew, there is the report of the statements of Clement, and "those Gospels were first written which include the genealogies."⁵

¹W.G. Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 44, 85.

²Grant, op. cit., p. 107.

³Ibid., p. 129. He goes on to treat the claim that an apostle cannot have utilized the work of one who was not an apostle, stating that an apostle might have known Mark's account to be essentially accurate, "but needed some revision and some supplementation." Ibid.

⁴The problem of language, which also meets this theory, might be partly obviated by the linguistic knowledge which must have been required of a tax collector.

⁵Eusebius, H.E., VI xiv. 6.

Irenaeus is quoted: "Now Matthew published among the Hebrews a written gospel also in their own tongue, while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome and founding the church."¹ And Eusebius' own judgment on the matter of the origins of the Gospel of Matthew was this:

Of all those who had been with the Lord only Matthew and John have left us their recollections, and tradition says they took to writing perforce. Matthew had first preached to Hebrews, and when he was on the point of going to others he transmitted in writing in his native language the Gospel according to himself, and thus supplied by writing the lack of his own presence to those from whom he was sent, and Mark and Luke had already² published the Gospels according to them. . . .

Origen said that Matthew's Gospel was the first written, and that it was composed for Jewish believers in Hebrew by Matthew, an apostle who had formerly been a tax-collector.³ And the testimony of Tertullian was, "Of the apostles, John and Matthew instill the faith into us; and of apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it."⁴ Augustine's opinion on Matthew's priority and Mark's abridgement has already been cited.

The patristic tradition is not uniform,⁵ but somewhat

¹Eusebius, H.E., V viii. 2, 3; Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. III i. 1.

²Eusebius, H.E., III xxiv. 5, 6. N. B.: He does not support the tradition of Matthean priority.

³Eusebius, H.E., VI xxv. 3, 4.

⁴Tertullian, Adv. Marc. iv. 2.

⁵It is still uncertain how much weight one may safely place on the patristic tradition, and so the conclusion of Robert Grant quoted above (p. 67) should be applied here also. One looks for corroborating evidence, often with little success.

mixed. The greatest amount of solidarity, however, is on the language of the writing of which they speak: Papias, Ireneus, Eusebius, and Origen state that it was composed in Hebrew. Only Origen and Augustine actually mention that Matthew's gospel was the earliest,¹ while Eusebius specifically contests that view.

In light of the scholarship of the past 150 years almost every point of the traditional view has been set aside. The investigation of the synoptic gospels led to the conclusion that the problem is first of all one of literary criticism. The agreements and differences can be explained on the basis of a relatively close literary relationship. Then, too, because of this literary relationship and its careful consideration, the priority of Mark and its use--in some form--by the writers of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke have come to be assured conclusions.

The general development of synoptic studies in the past century and one-half has tended to either de-emphasize the Gospels as having their basis in eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus, or to deny such a concept altogether. However, several scholars have recently come forward with theories which challenge this tendency. B. C. Butler's work, entitled The Originality of St. Matthew² was an attempt to

¹It is supposed that Tertullian would support this tradition, but it must remain unproved. The fact that he mentions John before Matthew is probably an indication that he has not attempted to speak on the matter of priority at all. Clement does indicate that the Gospels "which include genealogies" were first.

²Christopher Butler, The Originality of St. Matthew: A Critique of the Two-Document Hypothesis (Cambridge: the University Press, 1951.

reopen discussions on the theory of Marcan priority. Butler cites many points at which the parallel of Matthew to Mark has a more idiomatic Semitic form than the corresponding Marcan passage. In particular, he points up the difficulty in accounting for all of the unique Matthean constructions in parallels to Mark's Gospel, if Mark was Matthew's source.¹

Though Butler has raised some important questions along these lines, his conclusions leave many problems unresolved.² Though his argument is coherent, it appears to be intended not so much to convince one of a new theory as to raise important difficult questions about the old one.

Another suggestion, proposed by Léon Vaganay, is that an original Aramaic "Matthew"--that referred to by Papias--stands behind Mark, and also was used as a source for Matthew and Luke, although they both depend on Mark as well.³ Vaganay's theory has received attention, but it has not gained support from Protestant scholars generally.

¹Ibid., pp. 147-456, et passim. Butler calls attention to one device for accounting for Matthew's more original form in the claim that Mark also used a recension of Q, (pp. 89, 107-122).

²Cf. Hugo Meynell, "The Synoptic Problem: Some Unorthodox Solutions," Theology, 70 (1967), pp. 386-397. Meynell says that Butler "does not really answer the objections to the hypothesis that Mark depends directly on Matthew. It is, for instance, difficult to convince oneself that the author of Mark deliberately distorted Matthew's tolerable Greek grammar, or that Mark's rambling and circumstantial stories are literary elaborations of their compressed and polished Matthean equivalents." (p. 388).

³Léon Vaganay, Le Problème Synoptique (Paris and Tournai: Desclee & Co., 1954).

W. R. Farmer has simplified the synoptic problem to an extreme degree, in claiming that the Gospel of Mark is the latest of the synoptics, and that it is an attempt to fuse the material common to Matthew and Luke, omitting all that could not readily be so joined.¹ His theory leaves the glaring problem of the "Q" material, which of course is common to Matthew and Luke, and much of which would demand no "fusing" at all, but merely insertion.²

The theory suggested by Pierson Parker³ has not received much greater support than those of Butler, Vaganay, and Farmer; but it seems to have more to commend it. Parker suggests that an early form of Matthew, without the Q sections (and some thirty-eight verses of editorial material) was written in Palestine while Peter and Paul were preaching to the Diaspora and through the Gentile world. This theory suggests that this early proto-gospel (designated K)⁴ may have been written in Aramaic, and that it in any case had a strong Palestinian flavor.

¹W. R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem: A Critical Analysis (London: Macmillan, 1964).

²In addition, Farmer does not discuss Mark's unique treatment of the theme of secrecy. If Mark was a Gospel compiled from Matthew and Luke and intended to be acceptable to communities where the other two were known, some justification must be offered for such a change. His theory has been called a re-formulation of the theory of Griesbach, which has been examined frequently. Cf. F. C. Grant's review of Farmer's work, in Interpretation, 19 (1965), pp. 352-354.

³Pierson Parker, The Gospel Before Mark (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953).

⁴For the Greek πρόγονος κοινός, "common ancestor." Cf. Parker, op. cit., p. 5.

It came into the hands of John Mark, a protagonist for the gentile side of the controversy, at a time when the controversy was at a white heat. Mark excised from the Gospel what seemed to be anti-gentile portions, and he somewhat revised the remainder--all in the interest of the gentile Christian Church.¹

Later the compiler of the canonical Matthew combined K and Q with a small amount of further editing. In Parker's view "M" never existed by itself, nor was it added later as expansion of other works: it was "simply those parts of the Jewish Christian Gospel which Mark left out."²

The evidence which Parker adduces to support his theory is in the areas of vocabulary and style,³ content,⁴ and structure.⁵ Meynell suggests that this evidence is in fact weighty, but that the importance of Parker's work has not been rated as highly as it ought because of the natural reluctance of scholars to reconsider the case of what is commonly called the "one assured result of synoptic criticism."⁶

It must be admitted that the work of the Roman Catholic

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Parker seeks to prove that the vocabulary and style of "M" material, Mark, and Matthew's parallels to Mark show a similarity which is lacking in Q. (pp. 5, 29-41, 156ff.).

⁴Parker, op. cit., pp. 87-128.

⁵Parker speaks particularly of the "signs of abridgement" in Mark (Cf. Mark 4:2, 4:33, 12:1, and 12:38) and the interruption of M material with Q passages (pp. 49-53).

⁶Meynell, op. cit., p. 389. Cf. the assurance of Marcan priority reflected in Moffatt, (ILNT) p. 180; Sherman Johnson in The Interpreter's Bible (New York: Abingdon Press, 1951), VII, p. 235; and B. W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1930), p. 10.

writers involved in these recent studies challenging Marcan priority may be motivated by sincere attempts to find a tenable reconciliation between critical evidence and the decisions of the Biblical Commission of June 19, 1911, and of June 26, 1912.¹ However, neither Parker nor Farmer would have such a motive, and theirs at least must be seen as attempts to resolve the tensions which remain with current synoptic answers.

In spite of all that has been said of varying directions of recent study, general confidence in the two-source theory, acceptance of Marcan priority and the existence of a Q document in some form, remains. For the present, it leaves fewer unsolved problems than any other theory which has been developed. Most New Testament scholars no longer question it.

In a recent study by E. P. Sanders the whole area of synoptic relationships is put forth as a subject of renewed examination. Sanders challenges the assurance with which the two-document theory and Marcan priority have been accepted. He notes that certain tests applied to synoptic pericopes to establish the earlier form have not

¹These decisions required adherence to belief in the priority of the Gospel of Matthew, and affirmed its original language as the native dialect of Palestine, its author as the Apostle Matthew, and its date before the destruction of Jerusalem. In addition they denied any substantial variance between the Semitic original and the present Greek form and denied that Matthew was author only of Parts, or sources, of the Gospel. For the full text, cf. John Chapman, The Four Gospels (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1944), pp. 75-83.

been conclusive.¹ But in fact, they have failed to be conclusive simply because there is not an easily discovered pattern to the tendencies of development.

On all counts the tradition developed in opposite directions. It became both longer and shorter, both more and less detailed, and both more and less Semitic. Even the tendency to use direct discourse for indirect, which was uniform in the post-canonical materials which we studied, was not uniform in the Synoptics themselves. For this reason, dogmatic statements that a certain characteristic proves a certain passage to be earlier than another are never justified.²

What Sanders has shown is that the synoptists used a great degree of editorial discretion in compiling their Gospels. He declares that the synoptic problem has been oversimplified, and underscores the fact that it demands more work.³ In another study on the synoptic problem, Sanders submits to further examination the argument for Marcan priority from the relative order of the three synoptics. He notes that as early as 1909 Sir John Hawkins had publicly listed no fewer than ten agreements in

¹Some of these tests are: that the earlier form will be more vivid and detailed, the later form will be more compressed, smoothed, more conventional; and rough language-forms, particularly "Semitisms" will be smoothed. E. P. Sanders, The Tendencies of the Gospel Tradition (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), pp. 21-26. Sanders' study is the sort of investigation which Bultmann and Taylor sought to utilize as a way of learning Synoptic tendencies, but Sanders says "they did not do it thoroughly" (p. 25).

²Sanders, op. cit., p. 272.

³"The evidence does not seem to warrant the degree of certainty with which many scholars hold the two-document hypothesis. It would also seem to forbid that a similar degree of certainty should be accorded any other hypothesis. . . . I suggest that the time has come to look at the whole matter freshly." Sanders, op. cit., pp. 278, 279.

order in the insertion of Q material within Marcan material.¹ These ten agreements are minor, to be sure, but the "small points at which Matthew and Luke agree against Mark in a point of order are just as difficult to explain as large ones would be. But the small points have never been investigated."²

Sanders and others seem to have turned over enough new ground to provide the impetus for further sifting the synoptic soil. If only to settle the issues again, and to disprove the validity of the challenges, further investigation must be made.

The general opinion surrounding the origin of the Gospel of Matthew is almost completely bound up with the whole synoptic problem. It may be that in a re-evaluation of synoptic studies, a new formulation of the place of Matthew's Gospel will be necessary. Nevertheless, as the two-source theory remains the best conception of the inter-relationship of the synoptic Gospels, so a date sometime

¹Sir John Hawkins, Horae Synopticae, 2d ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1909), p. 208. The same information is repeated by Hawkins in Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem, ed. W. Sander (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1911), p. 102.

²E. P. Sanders, "The Argument From Order and the Relationship Between Matthew and Luke," New Testament Studies, 15 (1968-69), p. 253. Sanders speaks of the great oversimplification which is made in asserting that "Both Matthew and Luke generally support Mark's order," and supports his declaration in this way: using Huck's division of 101 pericopes in Mark, in only 58 of them do both Matthew and Luke support Mark's order. If we separately examine the 61 pericopes before the entry into Jerusalem and the 40 after, it is clearer to observe that "both Matthew and Luke support Mark's order three-fourths of the time after the entry into Jerusalem, but less than half the time before the entry." (p. 254).

relatively soon after A.D. 70 provides the best working hypothesis for the origin of Matthew's Gospel.¹

Now specifically speaking of the origin and date of the Gospel of Matthew, on the basis of the general trend of synoptic studies during the past three-quarters of a century the settled opinion has come to be that Mark was written between 65 and 70 A.D.; Q was written some fifteen years earlier; and Matthew was written some time between 70 and 100. A date during the last twenty years of the first century is considered the most probable.²

The author of the "first" gospel is not known. He was "a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian,"³ and had some knowledge of rabbinic thought.⁴ Though most scholars favor Antioch or elsewhere in Syria as the place of origin, much less certainty can be found there.

The evangelist of the Gospel of Matthew had a strongly eschatological viewpoint. As Günther Bornkamm points out, he wove together the strands of eschatology, and Christ-

¹Cf. Gabriel Hebert, "The Problem of the Gospel According to St. Matthew," Scottish Journal of Theology, 14 (1961), pp. 403-413, in which Matthew's Gospel is seen as an individual Jewish Christian's attempt to provide spiritual and moral stability for the "Great Church," which was by this time predominantly Gentile.

²Hardly considered these days is the earlier dating proposed by Harnack, which accepted a date in the mid-sixties for Acts, a year or two earlier for Luke (and, on the basis of an early Q, also of Matthew), and a date of around 50 for Mark.

³Kümmel, op. cit., p. 85.

⁴This proposal is hardly to be disputed as a glance through volume I of Strack-Billerbeck's Kommentar (op. cit.) will readily indicate. Kümmel cites Ropes, Schlatter, Feine-Behm, Heard, McNeille-Williams, Kilpatrick, Stendahl, and others, favoring this conclusion.

ology, with the addition of a developed concept of the Church.¹ The complexities of the post-Easter Christian's relation to the law enter into the development of the tradition. Matthew as a theological work provides a great deal of fertile soil for conclusions concerning the church situation of Matthew's time and place. But it must be said that hypotheses have been accepted as assumed "results" too readily in the past.² Even the assurance with which this Gospel has generally been considered a writing by a Jewish Christian for a Jewish Christian community³ is open to challenge.⁴

If the conclusions of this study are few, let it be

¹Günther Bornkamm, part one of G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, H. J. Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, trans. Percy Scott (London: SCM Press, 1963), pp. 15-51.

²Cf. Morna Hooker, "New Testament Scholarship in the 1960's," The Church Quarterly, 2 (January 1970), where Dr. Hooker writes, "The danger is that . . . NT scholars will seize too readily on new hypotheses, and make them, in turn, into new traditions. Possible solutions are changed too easily into dogmas." (pp. 213, 214).

³Cf., e.g., Peter Richardson, Israel in the Apostolic Church, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), p. 194, for one of the most recent confident statements of this idea.

⁴For example, Johannes Munck challenged the whole concept of a Jewish Christianity as it is usually defined. Cf. his Paul and the Salvation of Mankind (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1960), and especially "Jewish Christianity in Post-Apostolic Times," New Testament Studies 6 (1960), pp. 103-116. It is interesting to note that Georg Strecker, (Der Weg Der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus), and W. Trilling (Das Wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus evangeliums), Erfurter Theologische Studien, 7 (Leipzig, 1959), both have argued against Jewish authorship. A similar result is reached by Paul Nepper-Christensen, Das Matthäusevangelium: Ein judenchristliches Evangelium?, (Acta Theologica Danica, Vol. 1 Aarhus, 1958).

stated also that the consensus in current Matthean studies is not great. The Gospel of Matthew is a proper subject of continuing study. Krister Stendahl has suggested that Matthew was produced as a document for use by a Christian "school" in the training of Church leaders. Both the organization and the ethical scope of this Gospel could lend themselves readily to such use. Bornkamm, at the end of his article in the festschrift in honor of C. H. Dodd (1956), wrote: "die These von Stendahl, hinter dem Matth.-Ev. stünde eine christliche Schriftgelehrten-Schule, ist mir durchaus überzeugend."¹ A detailed study incorporating and further developing Stendahl's hypothesis has not appeared, though commentators generally regard the thesis highly. Yet in the preface of the new edition of the work by Stendahl, its author admits that his book does not "come to grips with the great problem of finding the place of Matthew within the spectrum of early Christianity."² Hellenistic elements in the Gospel of Matthew are mentioned by Blair,³ but again it seems that further analysis by specialists is desirable.

In sum, once more it must be said that consensus regarding Matthew's Gospel is difficult to find. It is to

¹G. Bornkamm, "Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthäusevangelium," The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), p. 260. n. 4.

²K. Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew, Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Uppsaliensis, 2d ed. (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1967), p. x. Cf. infra. pp. 86, 137.

³E. P. Blair, Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), pp. 156ff.

be hoped that succeeding chapters of this study may make some positive contributions to knowledge about the Gospel of Matthew and its origins.

CHAPTER THREE

CONSIDERATION OF THE LITERARY GENRE:
GOSPEL; EPISTLE

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The problems of the similarities and the great contrasts between the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew may be clarified to a large extent with an examination of the literary genre of the respective writings.

The epistle¹ had a long-established history. Multitudes of examples of this genre are available for examination and classification. On the other hand, we know of no writing prior to Mark which can properly be classed with the literary form of our canonical gospels.

It has become almost axiomatic that the gospels are not biographies. Rather, the interest of the writers centers around a historical approach to faith.² Kümmel

¹Distinguishing between a letter as having a limited scope of both purpose and intended readership, and an epistle which may be more a literary convention utilized in writings which are intended to circulate to larger numbers of people and for a much less limited time, the Epistle of James is the latter rather than the former. Kümmel says, "In view of the special manner of using the epistolary form in the primitive Christian mission, the lines between actual letters and epistles in the NT cannot always be sharply drawn." Kümmel, Introduction, p. 177.

²Some, from an existential framework, for example point to an incongruity between "history" and "faith"; but in fact the gospels appear at a great number of points to link faith with the deeds of the one who, by his deeds, becomes trustworthy.

reminds us that although the traditional material in the Gospels was formed "in the context and for the support of the Christian community's proclamation and teaching, [yet] this in no way means that faith has created the tradition."¹

It is quite natural to assume that the form, content, and structure of the kerygma had a great deal of influence on the construction of a gospel.² The ministry, passion, and resurrection of Jesus were the strong elements which had become the core of the apostolic declaration: these elements comprise almost all of the material of the gospel writings.³

Guthrie says:

The Evangelists . . . were not literary men and were not setting out to be. They had no interest in conforming to any conventional pattern. . . . It is part of the problem of the literary investigation of the Gospels that no precise parallels exist. . . .⁴

Though it may be said that the evangelists did not set out to follow established conventions of literature,⁵ yet

¹Werner Georg Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament: According to Its Major Witnesses Jesus - Paul - John (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), pp. 25f.

²Cf. C. H. Dodd, "The Framework of the Gospel Narrative," New Testament Studies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), pp. 9-11. Cf. also Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 3d ed., 1963), especially pp. 46-52.

³Ibid.

⁴Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 14.

⁵As Kümmel says, "In the Synoptic Gospels we meet for the first time a new, distinctive literary category [Literatur Gattung]. The Gospels, viewed as a literary form, are a new creation." Kümmel, Introduction, p. 32.

those men seem to have followed a discernible pattern, and to have established conventions of their own.¹ Following an idealized kerygmatic scheme, rather than one which was strictly chronological or strictly topical, the evangelists "invented" conventions which were appropriate to their purpose.

The whole matter of the 'purpose' or 'intention' of the evangelists has been considered in a study by C. F. D. Moule. His contention is that each of the gospels has material which was adaptable to the evangelistic mission of the primitive Church--Luke and John, it is suggested, were written with a view to the actual reading by outsiders, while Mark and Matthew were produced for first-hand reading by believers only, but with apologetic use in the picture.²

One of the problems which the interpreter faces in regard to the gospels is that of distinguishing the times of Jesus and his ministry from their portrayal of the post-Easter faith. In their representation of pre-Easter

¹This is inherent in the statement of Conzelmann, "The gospel as a literary form was created by Mark." Hans Conzelmann, An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament (trans. John Bowden from the second edition, Grundriss der Theologie des Neuen Testaments), (London: SCM Press, 1969), p. 98.

²C. F. D. Moule, "The Intention of the Evangelists," New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester: The University Press, 1959), p. 176. Moule speaks of more than one purpose for Mark and Matthew, emphasizing that of fitting the Christian reader for encountering unbelievers in apologetic and evangelistic settings (pp. 168, 176). Stendahl's suggestion is that Matthew was a training manual for believers, especially for leaders in the Church (Stendahl, School of St. Matthew, pp. 2-16).

events, it would not be in the least remarkable that the evangelists should become interpreters of events which foreshadow the faith of the Church. The remarkable thing is that they do not do much more of it. One sees κήρυγμα in the overall framework and in details: but in the era of Mark's composition it seems strange to hear of Christian writing which ignores the Pauline and/or Petrine categories of trusting Christ,¹ having access to God through Christ, being 'in Christ,' and the possession of the Holy Spirit.²

It would be inaccurate to assert that the Gospels are free from post-Easter theology and other anachronistic reference; but it may be helpful to point to the fact that there is a reserve which must have guided evangelists,³ in contrast to writers involved in the composition of New Testament epistles. Bruce reminds us that

the earliest preachers of the gospel knew the value of first-hand testimony, and appealed to it time and again. . . . And it can have been by no means so easy as some writers seem to think to invent words and deeds of Jesus in those early years, when so many of his disciples were about, who could remember what had

¹Although πιστεύω appears at least ten times in Mark, in none of the occurrences is the emphasis that of trusting in Christ. Occasionally with use of πίστις the significance is that of believing in the power of Jesus to perform mighty works (Mk. 2:5; 5:39; 10:52).

²Cf. Moule, *Ibid.*, p. 171. The other canonical Gospels tend to follow Mark in this restraint, with their own variations. One notable example of their unwillingness to mar their work with anachronisms is found in the study of baptism. Little hint of its significance for the primitive Church may be discovered from the Gospels.

³X. Léon Dufour, The Gospels and the Jesus of History (London: Collins, 1969), pp. 193-199, 204-218.

and had not happened. Indeed, the evidence is that the early Christians were careful to distinguish between sayings of Jesus and their own inferences or judgments. . . . And it was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with. . . . The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of wilful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so."¹

Martin, while insisting that we must treat the Gospels as theological documents, says: "Apparently the evangelists thought they were reporting solid history, and that the chief actor in their drama was a flesh-and-blood character, living a human life under Palestinian skies."²

Aside from order and content, there may be certain other observable phenomena which characterize a gospel, in distinction from an epistle. One such characteristic is the element of direct quotation. The canonical gospels are filled with direct discourse, whether the precise words of a speaker are represented or whether a rather casual reconstruction of the words or event is made. In the first one-third of the first chapter of Mark's gospel alone, for example, three segments of direct quotation appear, occupying most of four out of the first fifteen verses, (and not including the dual Old Testament quotation in verses 2 and 3). On the average, one need only read as far as the third verse of any chapter of Mark, and in no case must one read further than the seventh

¹F. F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents, 5th ed. (London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1960), pp. 45f.

²Ralph P. Martin, New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students: Vol. I, The Four Gospels (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 43f.

verse, to find direct quotation. The same may be said of all but the first chapter of Matthew.¹

In contrast, it appears that direct quotation is extremely rare in an epistle. One is aware of a few such examples in Paul's epistles.² However, even in autobiographical sections, where one might expect representations of dialogue, the only direct quotations are nearly always of the writer himself, and not of others who were involved.³ In the New Testament epistles which are usually thought to be pseudepigraphic, as well, there is a paucity of even such references as might help to support the claim of a pseudepigraphic writer.

The phenomenon which we observe in the New Testament appears to have been also generally characteristic of the category of letters in the ancient Greek world. One may read extensive collections of papyri, such as Greek Papyri in the British Museum and find only the most scant references to any authority outside the writer--and such few as there are, are quite indirect in their reference. In

¹In fact, of Matthew's 1068 verses, 709 verses--in whole or in part--involve direct quotation of words represented as spoken words (dialogue, pronouncement, or discourse). This is over sixty-five percent of Matthew's verses. Even if one eliminates from consideration the chapters in Matthew which contain the great discourses (chapters 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 18, 23, 24, and 25, which are almost exclusively such quotation), half of the gospel's remaining verses (344 of 687) contain direct quotation. This enumeration does not include Old Testament references or quotations except as they are placed on the lips of persons being quoted.

²Cf. e.g. II Cor. 10:10; 12:9; I Cor. 11:24, 25.

³Here note the style of Galatians 2: especially vv. 9, 10, 11ff; also I John 1:1-5.

"Papyrus 1948," the Zenon archive, Glaukias writes to Apollonios, in part:

. . . On arrival at Bathenath I took Melas with me and inspected the plants and everything else. The estate seems to me to be satisfactorily cultivated and he said the vines numbered 80,000¹ (emphasis ours, to point out the indirect source of authority).

In the publication of Some Oxford Papyri, by E. P. Wegener, the tenth papyrus fragment contains a similar indirect reference: "Ares, son of Hermias, from the metropolis, registered, as he says, in the quarter of the Bithyni and of other districts . . ." (emphasis ours).²

Similar oblique references to the statements or assertions of others occur in other collections of papyri, though even such second-party references as these are rare.³ Reference to the word of another which is more

¹T. C. Skeat, ed., Greek Papyri in the British Museum (Now in the British Library): Vol. VII, The Zenon Archive (London: Published for the British Library Board by British Museum Publications, Ltd., 1974), p. 37. The collection includes some 150 papyrus documents and fragments dating from 259 B.C. and later.

²Eefje Prankje Wegener, ed., Some Oxford Papyri (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1941), p. 39.

³The writer has examined Greek papyri in other collections, among which are: George Milligan, Here & There Among the Papyri (London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., MCMXXII); George Milligan, Selections from the Greek Papyri (Cambridge: University Press, 1912); C. H. Roberts, ed., Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester (Manchester: University Press, 1938), Vol. III; Adolf Deissmann, trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan, Light From the Ancient East (London: Hodder and Stoughton, MCMX); A. S. Hunt, and C. C. Edgar, Select Papyri (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, MCMXXIV), Vol. II. Work is needed in the area of exposition of characteristics in ancient letters beyond the common examination of patterns in the introduction, greeting, and conclusion (cf. Francis X. Exler, The Form of the

direct than this is impossible, or nearly impossible, to find.

In ancient Jewish literature, on the other hand, there seems to have been a somewhat different standard for the letter form. C. J. G. Montefiore wrote:

It is usually pointed out that Esther stands in a different category from the other books. Twice it is called an Iggeret (IX, 26,29), i.e. an 'Epistle', and, hence, as a letter, it lacks the name of God. . . . And when the Reader comes to the word 'epistle,' he raises the scroll and shakes it slightly to show that it is a letter that he is reading and not a book.¹

The book (or "letter") of Esther does contain numerous instances of indirect and direct quotation. That this was a common pattern in Jewish letters is not so certain; but the example we have cited at least establishes one clear counter-note in contrast to the possible Greek and New Testament phenomenon regarding the form of epistolary literature.

Of the twenty-one letters and epistles in the New Testament, only two are anonymous: one, the Epistle to the Hebrews, completely so, and the other, I John, designated purposely only as the work of an eyewitness of Jesus. Both of these fall somewhat outside the genre 'epistle' in other ways, notably in the lack of an address to the

Ancient Greek Letter; A Study in Greek Epistolography (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1923). Cf. also Louis F. Gough, "Epistolary Literature of the New Testament" Ashland Theological Bulletin (Ashland, Ohio: Ashland Theological Seminary), 6, Spring, 1973, pp. 28-38.

¹C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, eds., A Rabbinic Anthology: Selected and Arranged with Comments and Introductions (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 99, 100.

readers. Hebrews has been termed more a "treatise" than an epistle.¹

Although the statistical sampling is not large enough for clear definition, is it possible, as it appears, that in the milieu of first-century Christianity there may have been a factor of limitation, dictating these elements, i.e., when writing in an advisory capacity, one should use the epistolary form: name himself at the outset; and refrain from direct quotation of sources of authority? It is clear that when writing essentially "kerygmatic-historical" material one may name and quote persons on either side of a controversy, or reproduce long passages of topical discourse attributed to Jesus, while in the writing refraining from self-identification.²

Though the apocryphal gospels, written largely in the first two-thirds of the second century, reveal no

¹Donald Selby, Introduction to the New Testament (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p. 419.

²It seems likely that it is the advisory capacity of epistles which makes it necessary for the writer to identify himself; while a "gospel" is written with the intended status of historical writing: i.e., the attitude of the writer is that he is faithfully representing events, so far as he has been able to verify them, and therefore that self-identification would detract from the aura of authority. It would then be only the word of a "Mark," "Luke," etc. Without placing too much emphasis on this possibility, it does seem to have internal support in Luke's preface (Luke 1:1-4) and in John's epilogue (Jn. 21:24). Luke's preface, of course, is written in the first person singular; but this fact does not negate the proposition for the anonymity is preserved even here, and the preface may be related to the Gospel of Luke in the sense of a 'cover letter.' A similar observation may be made concerning the final verses of John 21. Cf. Edward P. Blair, Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 16: "Their books are anonymous; they want the reader to see Jesus only."

consistent pattern in the matter of anonymity, there is a tendency toward identification--in their case mainly pseudonymous identification.¹

The term gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) did not at first signify any sort of written document: it was rather the oral preaching which was good news concerning God's work among men.² The term kerygma, in fact, often appears as a synonym for Gospel, and signifies the message which is declared, an act of God.³

Mark's opening declaration itself, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . ." may have eventually given the designation "gospel" to the new Christian literary genre.⁴ In the usage of Paul the noun often carries

¹Among the apocryphal gospels and similar second century writings which identify an ostensible author are: The Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Gamaliel, The Gospel of Bartholomew, the Pilatic Literature, Epistula Apostolorum, The Gospel of Peter, The Gospel of the Ebionites, and the fragment designated "A Gospel Fragment from the Strasbourg Coptic Papyrus." (Cf. Edgar Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, ed. by Wilhelm Schneemelcher, English edition ed. by R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), I, 227-230 et passim.)

²Cf. Schneemelcher's article in Hennecke, op. cit., p. 73.

³It is worth noting as well that λόγος often has the same use as εὐαγγέλιον, and as Piper observes, "all the verbs used in connection with 'gospel' are also applied to 'word' e.g. 'proclaim,' 'obey,' 'announce,' 'hear,' 'confirm,' 'speak,' 'have,' 'give,' 'come.'" This usage of λόγος follows the frequent use of the Hebrew דבר as the "thing" or the "act" rather than being limited to "word": and so the New Testament statements concern ultimately the act of God. (Cf. O. A. Piper, "Gospel [Message]," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, p. 443.)

⁴Grobel writes, "Unintentionally he also contributed the eventual name for this new form, which was derived from, but not identical with, the title he gave his book." (K. Grobel, "Gospels" I.D.B., p. 449.)

the concept of a body of doctrine, the dynamic center of Paul's proclamation of the Cross and Resurrection (e.g. "my gospel," "any other gospel"), and opens the way for the development (especially after Mark's usage) of the term, as a designation of the written message. The proper emphasis on the traditional titles of the gospels is, of course, "according to Mark this is the gospel" instead of "this is the gospel according to Mark." Thus the "gospel" remains the message instead of the writing.

What sort of writing did the evangelists believe they were doing? The answer to this question has been clarified by protracted research into the synoptic question; by source-; form-; and particularly by redaction-criticism,¹ and by the great number of comparative investigations which have been conducted. Ultimately, however unclear may be the Sitz im Leben of any of the gospels, it is not untenable to suggest that the evangelists believed that they were writing quasi-historical accounts of an unusual man, designated the Son of God. Perrin says, of the faith of the early church:

The resurrection vindicated Jesus as eschatological prophet and revealed him as Lord; the early church, convinced of this, proclaimed his coming as he had proclaimed the coming of the kingdom and prepared herself for that coming by reiterating his teaching as showing what men must do to stand well at that coming. So the continuity here is very real, and the historical Jesus must be held to be of significance to the faith of earliest Christianity.²

¹Cf. especially Willi Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 11ff.

²Norman Perrin, What is Redaction Criticism? (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 76.

The purpose of the evangelists was clearly kerygmatic,¹ and so Dodd insists, "there never existed a tradition formed by a dry historical interest in the facts as facts. From the beginning the facts were preserved in memory and tradition as elements in the Gospel which the Church proclaimed."² Yet they do also contain what Dodd represents as "facts." In another place Dodd says:

the faithfulness of the evangelists to historical memory led them to represent their Master as dealing with children and speaking of animals in a way they did not understand, but felt to be characteristic of him. If this is so in this one instance, it may well be so in others. . . . It is certainly true that the evangelists have preserved statements about Jesus which neither they nor the other early Christian writers appreciated in their full significance.³

This statement is true, as far as it goes, but it must be balanced by a full recognition that the evangelists in large measure controlled the tradition they bore. It is difficult for the modern student of the gospels to envision the field of synoptic studies without the tools and viewpoints contributed by redaction criticism.⁴ To

¹Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, pp. 51ff.

²C. H. Dodd, The Authority of the Bible (London: Fontana Books, Revised ed., 1960), pp. 214ff.

³Ibid.

⁴Piper, "Gospel," p. 444. As event without interpretation would prove meaningless, so interpretation (meaning) without event (substance) would prove empty. Cf. Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist; work along similar lines was done independently by Hans Conzelmann in Theology of St. Luke, trans. G. Buswell (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), and by Günther Bornkamm in his essay "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew," [available to us in Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew by Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963) pp. 15-51].

be sure, the full force of redaction criticism is a phenomenon which developed in Germany in the 1950's, but it was incipient in the thought of R. H. Lightfoot fully twenty years earlier.¹ This critical tool of study attempts to take fully into account the creativity of the interaction of the evangelists with the tradition which they received, in the matter of changes introduced by editing, the arrangement of the material, and the geographical settings which affect the theological tone of the gospels. More than this, it reinstates the gospels in study as whole pieces of literature, instead of as collections of pericopes loosely strung together.

The evangelists were convinced that the Gospel which impelled them was true.² As Piper points out, that Gospel is:

the proclamation of a fact that is announced by God. . . . It is not to be identified with . . . "kerygma"--viz., an enumeration of certain events in the life of Jesus. They are enumerated there³ as evidences of the truthfulness of the gospel.

The evidence, to serve as support, must be regarded as essentially factual. The faith of the primitive church had a source. Hoskyns and Davey conclude that that source

¹Cf. Norman Perrin's discussion in his What is Redaction Criticism? pp. 21-24. Cf. also Dennis E. Nineham's "Introductory Memoir" to Lightfoot in Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. vi-xvi.

²Cf. Ernest Best, The Temptation and the Passion: The Marcan Soteriology [Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series: No. 2] (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. xi.

³Piper, "Gospel," p. 444.

is in fact "the life and death of Jesus."¹

The evangelists did not merely seek to include stories from the current preaching; they also researched with what oral and literary sources they had. They often took great pains to copy carefully the documents which came their way; and they collated or conflated in order to include material which was written to meet an entirely different need from that for which they wrote. In many cases the pericopes readily adapted themselves to more than one use: the Lord's prayer is a case in point. In Luke (11:2-4) this pericope is used to teach about prayer and its efficacy; while in Matthew (6:9-13) it has further significance as a teaching device on the subject of human forgiveness (especially verses 14-15).

In any case, the source-materials were welded together--with many of the seams still visible--to form serious literary works of a type which otherwise has not appeared.²

The evangelists interwove oral tradition (which they had verified insofar as means of verification were available to them) with written sources, which they believed to be trustworthy,³ to portray the things about which they were

¹Sir Edwin Hoskyns and Noel Davey, The Riddle of the New Testament (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), pp. 162, 170.

²K. Grobel has pointed out that some scholars consider the "Lives of Jesus" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a recent mutation of the gospel form. ("Gospels," IDB, II, 449).

³Some--perhaps more than a few--eye-witnesses were still available to come forward in order to contradict

certain: i.e., that God had in their times shown a New Way, that this Way was a way of salvation, and that it was based on both words and events,¹ which had recently taken place among them.

The evangelists did not intend to write history as such. What they did attempt to do was to make a rather detailed portrayal of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, which would on the one hand confirm the faith of believers, and on the other hand convince unbelievers that in the person of Jesus God had spoken.

Bultmann and others have proposed that the deeds of Jesus are not important to Christianity: that the dass (of the Cross) is the only indispensable element, and that the primitive communities clothed whatever Jesus was, with the language of myth. But in fact in the epistles of the New Testament there is myth-element in the portrayal of Jesus: the writers of the epistles go about the task of

misappropriations of fact in sources or in their use (Cf. Vincent Taylor, Formation of the Gospel Tradition).

¹It is readily granted that the simplest form of the primitive kerygma omits teaching material, though the very method of stating the kerygma is interpretive; on the other hand, it seems that the document Q -- if such a source existed as a document--was inadequate principally because it contained teaching without event. Both the word of Jesus and his acts were important parts of the gospel message and were to be declared; but if one arm must be used alone it was to be the event. (Cf. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, pp. 50ff.).

²While it remains debatable how far the individual gospels sought to meet the needs of believers and how far evangelization was the purpose, I see Matthew as an example which largely tends toward the former purpose and John the latter. (Cf. Matt. 28:16-20, John 20:31) (Cf. Dodd, Apostolic Preaching, pp. 53, 72f.).

declaring what Christianity--the Church and Christian life--ought to be, tacitly assuming (and only occasionally plainly declaring) that God was in Christ, Jesus Christ was the Son of God, that he was the Wisdom of God and the power of God.

What of this? There is, at least apparently, a dilemma here. First, if it was natural for the primitive communities to clothe the ministry of Jesus with mythological categories, why do we find so little of such expression in the epistles? The New Testament epistolary material is strikingly free of reference to the events of the life of Jesus, to be sure. But no strokes appear describing in detailed mythological terms the one they called Lord. But second, if tying the primitive faith to actual event (as distinct from myth) was important, why do the epistles give so little of such "event" beyond the fact of Cross and Resurrection? Conversely, if only the Cross and Resurrection are important to Christianity, why do the Gospels and Acts spell out in detail a number of incidents in Jesus' life--and seemingly intend them to be accepted as historically true? Neill says:

We are told that the early Christian communities made little distinction between the history of Jesus before the Resurrection and his history after the Ascension, between the words that he was believed to have spoken in the days of his flesh and the words that he continued to speak in the Spirit in the Church through the lips of inspired teachers and prophets. This seems, in point of fact, to run counter to all the evidence that we have. All the evidence makes it plain that 'the doctrine of the Ascension,' to use a much later phrase, was firmly held in the early Church. For a certain period manifesta-

tions of the risen Lord occurred; after that no such manifestations occurred. No confusion between these two periods was possible. The only post-ascension utterances of the risen Christ in the New Testament (apart from a few brief words reported as having been spoken to St. Paul) are the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. It is hard to imagine anything more different than these from the traditions of the Gospels.¹

One more strand is to be picked up again. It has already been pointed out that the so-called "sayings source," or "Q" appears to have been deficient in that it did not relate event, but almost exclusively teaching. This does not attempt to suggest that Q is incorporated in other writings of the New Testament, but on the other hand it is conceivable that other early traditions of Jesus' teaching existed--without reference to event--and that they were incorporated into epistles.

I suggest that a number of authentic sayings of Jesus appear in the epistles, notably in the Epistle of James, in other guise. Moreover, I believe that some of these dominical sayings are discernible through comparison of that epistle with the Gospel according to Matthew.²

¹Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 262. The point I wish to make with the inclusion of this quotation is somewhat different from Neill's own major intent, which is to emphasize a time-lapse between the Resurrection and the Ascension. My own point, also derived from Neill, is that the early Christian communities made a clear distinction between the history of Jesus before the Easter event and that after the Ascension. The traditions in the Gospels appear in one mode; those concerning Jesus after the Ascension are in quite another, as Neill's words remind us.

²For support of this contention, cf. Schlatter, Jakobus; Kittel, "Der Geschichtliche Ort . . .", passim; Mayor, op. cit., pp. lxi ff. which are referred to in detail in Chapter 10.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHARACTER AND ACTS OF GOD

THE CHARACTER AND ACTS OF GOD

If the Christian community had produced no other documents than the Epistle of James and the Gospel according to Matthew--if our New Testament consisted only of these two writings--what would the present generation know of primitive Christianity? In the same vein, one can ask the further question, "Would what we learn from the Epistle of James be in agreement with what the Gospel of Matthew tells us?" Without spending an undue amount of time in such a pursuit, it may be profitable to examine the two documents with such questions in view.

The first item to be noticed is that both writings begin by aligning what they have to say with the nation Israel. Whereas James gives greeting to "the twelve tribes in the dispersion."¹ Matthew immediately traces Jesus' ancestral roots, through Joseph, to David and Abraham.² Matthew's method would communicate more vividly to a Jew than to others; and one part of his message comes through thus: "Jesus was born and was reared as a son of the covenant, under the Law."³ James too affirms the wholesome

¹James 1:1.

²Matthew 1:1-16.

³There is certainly more to be said concerning the genealogy, and concerning Matthew's theological purpose in including it in just this form. Cf. Paul Gaechter,

character of submission to the will of God, not only for his readers, but for himself, when he declares, "He who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing."¹ The concern of James does not lie at this point with giving a definition of "the perfect law," other than to call it "the law of liberty." But his elaboration makes plain that it is a principle to be strictly adhered to. Ropes interprets this law to be "the same as τὸν ἔμψυτον λόγον of v. 21," which he in turn has described as "the sum of present knowledge of God's will." Of the phrase "τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας," Ropes says it signifies:

"the law in the observance of which a man feels himself free." It could have been used of the Mosaic law by a devout and enthusiastic Jew. . . . To a Christian "the perfect law of liberty" would include both the O.T. . . . and the precepts and truths of the Gospel; cf. 2:8-12 where the ten commandments and the commandment of love are all explicitly said to be a part of the law. The use of the phrase by a Christian implies that he conceived Christianity as a law, including the fulfilling (Mt. 5:17) of the old one.²

Die literarische Kunst im Matthäus-Evangelium (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1965), pp. 16ff. Cf. also David Hill, The Gospel of Matthew (London: Oliphants, 1972), pp. 74ff.

¹James 1:25.

²Ropes, James, pp. 173, 177f. Of this phrase Tasker says, "It is a perfect law because it is the law of the New covenant which Jeremiah prophesied would be written by God in men's inward parts and upon their hearts (see Je xxxi. 33)." (Tasker, James, p. 53). It may be that Ropes' interpretation attributes too little Jewishness to James' use of "the law of liberty."

Though there is an element of newness, it is plain that both James and Matthew wish to point out a measure of correspondence with Jewish thought.

Along with the implicit alignment of their respective messages with the Israelite nation, there is also the assumption of a place in continuity with the message of Israel's prophets. This continuity is readily seen in Matthew, with the writer's frequent use of "formula sayings," in which he uses the pattern, "this was done to fulfil that which was spoken by the prophet . . ." with slight variations.¹ As might be expected, such continuity with the prophets is not so readily seen in the five short chapters by James. Yet the whole ethical tenor of the epistle has a tone not unlike that of one of the prophets of righteousness, whether of an Amos or a John the Baptist.²

Indeed, it is this flavor of authority which led such an able scholar as James H. Moulton to suggest that the Epistle may have been written by the Brother of the Lord to non-Christian Jews, with full expectation of a receptive readership among them.³

¹Cf. for example Matt. 1:22; 2:17, 23; 8:17; 12:17, and others.

²The ethical demand, to be sure is on a different plane from that of Amos or the Baptist; but the imperative of James has a strikingly similar tone.

³James Hope Moulton, "Synoptic Studies, II. The Epistle of James and the Sayings of Jesus." The Expositor, 7th series, Vol. IV (1907), 46ff. Moulton says, "Is it not wholly in character that James should endeavor to plead with his countrymen abroad, waking afresh the tones of ancient prophecy and ancient 'Wisdom' alike, and weaving in a whole fabric of ethical teaching that had fallen from the lips of the supreme Prophet?" (46, 47).

Jews who would read this Epistle could often without great difficulty be led on to read such a book as our First Gospel, in which they would learn with surprise that many of the sayings they had accepted as heavenly wisdom, when purporting to come from pious and devout Jews, were really due to him whom all orthodox Jews had agreed never to hear.¹

The religious basis for ethical behaviour is one's belief concerning God. What sort of God is portrayed in the two documents at hand?

There is to be found in the Epistle of James a more overt teaching concerning God than in Matthew's Gospel. (The following description is intended to portray what James says about God, rather than what he says uniquely about God.) In James, God is Holy and righteous, untouched by evil.² He is unchanging.³ And James especially declares that God is Sovereign. It was of his own will that God brought us forth, creatures of his.⁴ God is the only lawgiver and Judge, sovereignly able to save and to destroy.⁵ The human creature only lives and acts in the realm of God's permissive will.⁶

It is the Lord who waits over the earth, as a farmer is patient over his fields until they bear fruit. At the end of his waiting the Lord will come, and He will judge.⁷

God is not only revealed in the Epistle of James as

¹Ibid., p. 47. ²James 1:13, 20. ³James 1:17.

⁴James 1:18. James is of course, not unique in this aspect of his teaching about God. It is also to be found, among other places, in the writings of the Prophets and of Paul.

⁵James 4:12. ⁶James 4:15.

⁷James 5:7, 8, 9; James 4:12.

transcendent over His creatures, and as one who stands over against them in judgment; He is also the One who answers the prayers of an Elijah. It is implicit in the last chapter of the Epistle that the same God is still waiting upon contemporary Elijahs to call upon Him.¹

The Gospel according to Matthew portrays a God of the same character, though there is very little overt teaching (from distinctively Matthean material) about those characteristics.² One does not find explicit statements in Matthew such as, "God is sovereign," or "God does not change." Yet the teaching is there implicitly. When Jesus declares, "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me,"³ and when the reader is given a glimpse of Jesus causing the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and the blind to see,⁴ it is evident that the God who gave such authority to Jesus has sovereign power over natural afflictions. Or, indeed, the power of God is revealed in the

¹James 5:13-18.

²It is not necessary on the basis of this contrast to see indications of a non-Jewish milieu for James. The constant allusion to Jewish concepts and to characters in Jewish tradition (i.e., Abraham, Rahab, Elijah) makes this unlikely. Indeed, as Sherman Johnson, The Theology of the Gospels (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1966), observes, "In the Gospels, as in the Old Testament, the nature of God is never defined abstractly and can only be determined by what is said about God's activity." (p. 50). James, on the other hand, calls for right behavior by appealing to right principles--including the nature and prerogatives of God.

³Matthew 28:28.

⁴Matthew 15:31.

resurrection itself.¹

"Your heavenly Father is perfect." So says Jesus in St. Matthew's Gospel, without appending an explanation of that perfection.² He does, however, include the imperative demand, addressed to the 'disciples' of Jesus who were included in the setting of the Sermon on the Mount, "You . . . must be perfect." No distinction is expressed between the perfection of the disciples and that of their heavenly Father. It seems probable that Matthew says just what he means to say, especially in view of the Lucan parallel which has οἰκτίρων³ for Matthew's τέλειος. Yet it is at least possible, if it is not mandatory, to draw a distinction between the "perfection" of the disciples and that of the Father.⁴ The word as included by Matthew may have

¹Matt. 16:21; 17:9; 20:19. Matthew is consistent in using the passive (ἐγερθῆναι, ἐγερθῆ, ἐγερθήσεται) for Mark's usual use of the middle (ἀναστῆναι, ἀναστήσεται). The implication may be that Matthew found it necessary to attribute the power in the resurrection to God, while Mark attributes it to Jesus Himself. This interpretation must not be pressed, however (cf. Mark's ἡγέρθη in 16:6).

²Matthew 5:48. The perfection, of course, has much to do with God's impartiality, as does Luke's parallel word, "merciful."

³Luke 6:36. W. D. Davies in The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (Cambridge: The University Press, 1964), indicates with confidence that it was Matthew who made the deliberate change from the Q reading (p. 210). R. Gregor Smith in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, ed. Alan Richardson (London: SCM Press LTD., 1950), p. 167, asserts, on the other hand, that it was Luke who made the change from Q. We have already pointed out the views of Matthew Black and Frank Beare, both of whom believe that the Matthean form is probably original (cf. Supra, p. 61). For our purposes we shall treat the Matthean form as that found in his tradition of the sayings of Jesus, largely because of the convincing treatment of Professor Black.

⁴Davies suggests, "it is not impossible that τέλειος

roots in Deuteronomy 18:13--"You shall be blameless (τέλειος) before the Lord your God," where, as is most frequent, LXX has τέλειος for **מ'נִקְיָה** in the Masoretic Text. The command then would be for wholeness, blamelessness, and soundness--as indeed these qualities are found in all dealings of the heavenly Father. The immediate context of this statement about God in Matthew enjoins the love of enemies. By the saying concerning perfection, that command is further radicalized. "Perfection . . . is rooted in the new interpretation of the law which Jesus has brought."¹

But it is the Father who is described as already perfect. He "does not piece nor divide his love."² God is Himself whole; entire; sound. He has no fragmentation of personality such as James saw in the double-minded man.³ And God is unlike men, who often determine the good, but prove unwilling to practice it--they make a practice of a kind of partiality which is the antithesis of maturity.

Although they occasionally present difficulties in interpretation, the parables which are distinctive to

in Matthew 5:48 translates some form of slm. The disciples are exhorted to achieve their desired end" (Christian Origins and Judaism, p. 45). Cf. also M. Black, op. cit., p. 181.

¹Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (hereafter referred to as SSM), pp. 211, 212.

²H. A. W. Meyer, A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of Matthew, trans. Peter Christie, rev. and ed. by Frederick Crombie (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1883), quoting Luther. I, 197.

³James 1:7.

Matthew give some definite hints in regard to a doctrine of God.

The Acts of God

The God revealed in the Epistle of James and in the Gospel according to Matthew has acted in the affairs of man. James says, "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."¹

Much discussion concerning this cryptic verse has centered on the identity of the direct object of the sentence. Hort, in his posthumous commentary, explored the possibilities: (1) does the author mean to refer to us men, as opposed to the rest of God's creatures; or (2) is the reference narrowed to Israel (not distinguishing between Jew and Jewish-Christian); or (3) is it a reference to Christians exclusively?² Hort's own conclusion was that the first of the three alternatives fits the case--that James' reference is to all men,³ and not specifically the believer or Israel.

¹James 1:18.

²F. J. A. Hort, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan and Co., 1909), pp. 31-32. Hort's reasoning is based largely on the context. Verses 12-17, he says, "refer to God's dealings with all men generally." This is not self-evident in the passage to which he refers, especially in view of the reference to "the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him" (v.12). Hort also leans heavily on the absence of the articles with "the word of truth," and also the natural sense of κτισμάτων. He likewise must take ἐμφοτός in 1:21 to mean inborn or innate, rather than implanted, as do the RSV, NEB, New International Version, inter alia.

³Ibid.

On the contrary view, Mayor in his commentary¹ concludes that the reference in 1:18 is a reference to Christians. He further defends this conclusion against Hort's in his review of Hort's commentary, published in 1910.² J. E. Huther interprets this verse in a manner similar to Mayor, in the Meyer commentary series³ as does Bo Reicke in the contemporary Anchor Bible series.⁴ The significance of the debate for the discussion at hand is to determine just what James meant to say about the activity of God. That God acts, or has acted, in the affairs of men is not at issue: the question is "How?" The λόγος ἀληθείας is one of the keys: it may in itself, of course, simply signify an ethical word, or an utterance of truth. But in the function of the word of truth (in whatever connection) in "bringing us forth" the phrase has to go much further than that. Is it the word of creation ("Let there be light;" "let there be a firmament . . . ;" etc.)? As Hort rightly points out, this sense would not harmonize with ἀπεκύθησεν. Yet Hort proceeds to make a sharp contrast with I Peter

¹J. B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan and Co., 3d ed., 1901), s. v. Cf. also the excellent treatment of this verse in M. Dibelius, James (Revised by Heinrich Greeven, trans. Michael A. Williams, ed. Helmut Koester) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 103ff.

²J. B. Mayor, "Hort's Posthumous Commentary on St. James, Second Notice." The Expositor, 7th series, IX, 1910, pp. 553ff.

³J. E. Huther, Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistles of James and John (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1882), pp. 73-76.

⁴Bo Reicke, The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 18.

1:23 ("You have been born anew, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God."). He says:

Here the abiding word of God stands to the new birth, or renewal, in the same position as λόγ. ἄλ. in St. James to the original Divine birth when God breathed into man His life and man became in a higher sense than the animals, "a living soul," and the word is called a seed.¹

Blackman and Ropes are two more commentators who, upon examination of the evidence, conclude, against Hort and Spitta, that the ones "brought forth by a word of truth" must be Christians.²

Once more, the question to be answered is, "In what way does James conceive of God's action in the world?"

Upon examination, it is evident that verse eighteen climaxes the passage which began in verse twelve. The argument runs thus: a man has the promise of blessing when he maintains endurance through trial: for it is not God who is the source of the test, but in fact the temptation comes from inner desires. To correct a possible misapprehension of God, James says on the contrary, (probably

¹Hort, James, p. 34.

²E. C. Blackman, The Epistle of James (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 58. Among other considerations Blackman says, "If WORD OF TRUTH means Gospel, as in Eph. 1:13, Col. 1:5, it is surprising that the context should have made so little preparation for this sense." But on the other hand ". . . it can hardly be confined to signifying the thrice-repeated AND GOD SAID of Gen. 1:26-30." Ropes, speaking of Hort's view says, "The objection which seems decisive against this is that the figure of begetting was not used for creation (Gen. 1:26 does not cover this), whereas it came early into use with reference to the Christians, who deemed themselves 'sons of God.'" Ropes, James, p. 166.

employing part of a familiar Greek poetic line which is otherwise, however, unknown to us) that it is God who is the giver of good and perfect things; he is steadfast; moreover God is the one who willingly brought us forth by a word of truth to be an offering of first fruits to him--the firstfruits from among all his creatures.¹ If the significance of the passage is correctly explained by references to the 'new birth,' God has acted in history: He has been consistent in showing care and love for men. Never did He exhibit this love in fuller measure than when He paved the way, "by the word of truth," for men to become a special offering and possession for Himself.²

Though there is no theological declaration concerning God in the Gospel of Matthew which exactly parallels this, the words of Jesus according to Matthew come very close to one part of the thought of the passage: ". . . look at the birds of the air; . . . your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" The same sort of concern for his creatures--in this case both fowl and man--is displayed. But, strange as it may seem, there is no explicit mention in all of Matthew's Gospel of a new

¹Huther, loc. cit., rightly points out the cultic imagery which appears in the verse in the word "first-fruits" (ἀπαρχή).

²Cf. Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 136ff. Schlatter is convincing in his argument combining an emphasis on creation with the idea of the new birth: "Es gibt nun zwei verschiedene Bezeichnungen, in die Gott Menschen zu sich stellt: sie sind sein Geschöpf und noch mehr als das, sein Kind. Darin wird sichtbar, wohin Gottes Regierung die Menschheit als zu seinem letzten Ziele führen wird. . . . Das letzte Ziel Gottes umfasst die ganze Menschheit, alle von ihm Geschaffenen."

element in a redemption which God has accomplished or which God is in the process of accomplishing. Here it seems that Matthew must be contrasted with James (as with some other specific portions of the New Testament). Matthew has no "new birth" in the sense of John 3 or I Peter 1; no word of redemption strikingly revealed; rather the emphasis is on the Kingdom of Heaven which now has come close in Christ Jesus, God's Son.¹ The consistent emphasis is on continuity with the old order (in which God has already worked). Even the Kingdom of heaven (or Kingdom of God), though a new element in man's realm of being, is not new at all.² It is at last brought near, and announced, through Jesus.

On the other hand, according to the Gospel of Matthew, it is God who has acted in History in the birth of Jesus and in his protection as an infant.³ Similarly, there is

¹Jesus preached, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 4:17); He speaks of new wineskins, and unshrunk coth (9:16, 17); he reports that "the poor have good news preached to them (11:5); and he speaks of "something greater than the temple," ". . . greater than Jonah," and ". . . greater than Solomon" (12:6, 41, 42). But in none of these references is there explicit statement as to what the "good news" consists of. Central, however, to his message is the eschatological Kingdom of Heaven. Not everyone can enter that Kingdom ("unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter. . . ." (5:20, cf. 7:21). It seems to be nearly equated with "life" (For the gate is narrow, and the way is hard, that leads to life"--7:14; "It is better for you to enter life maimed or lame . . . with one eye than . . . to be thrown into the hell of fire"--18:8,9).

²Cf. Allen, *Matthew*, pp. lxviii f, where the concept of the Kingdom is described in terms of being the sovereignty of God, and universal recognition of it. Such recognition is, of course, the new element.

³Matthew 1:18 to 2:23.

no doubt that it is God who gave Jesus "all authority in heaven and on earth."¹ God gave Jesus special endowment of His Spirit² and twice spoke the words, "this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," once adding the phrase, "listen to him."³

In the First Gospel, though God is not described as the source of redemption (but instead as the one who has prepared the Kingdom of Heaven and has now brought it near in Christ),⁴ yet He is seen as one who has spoken in history. God has spoken through the prophets,⁵ and has not left men without a word of guidance. There is no explicit statement that the Law is an utterance of God, or that it is He who supports the law with authority, yet the statements which one finds concerning the Law are difficult to interpret otherwise. Jesus says, "For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law till all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them

¹Matthew 28:18.

²Matthew 3:16. The qualifying words, "of God" describing the Spirit's descent upon Jesus are unique to Matthew.

³Matthew 3:16 and 17:5.

⁴Cf. my further remarks on the Kingdom in Matthew, infra, pp. 134-139.

⁵Matthew 1:22 is but one example. There is much dispute about the use the author made of Old Testament passages especially in the so-called "formula sayings." Nevertheless, Matthew stands firmly in the tradition which saw the prophetic books as utterances of the Lord.

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."¹ The law was abiding validity--until heaven and earth are no more--and one's attitude and actions toward the Law will determine his status in the Kingdom of Heaven. The authority of the Law is the abiding authority of God.²

Similarly God has spoken in the world through the presence of His special messengers,³ angels--in Matthew, most often in the special category of dream-apparitions, but in two special Matthaean passages the statement does

¹Cf. the discussion of the interpretation of Matt. 5:17-19 in the section on "Law," *infra*, pp. 124-142. In spite of the ambiguities of statement, which appear to confirm and annul the Law at the same time, it is arguable that Jesus confirms the continuing authority of the Law. Davies, in his article "Matthew 5:17, 18" reprinted in *Christian Origins and Judaism*, says, "Clearly this radicalizing meant not merely the deepening of some parts of the Law but the annulling of others. . . . Nevertheless, according to Matt. 5:17f., the radicalizing of the Law by Jesus still leaves room for the validity of the Old Law in all its force, not only in parts." (p. 46). Again, Davies speaks of the possible tendency toward ἀνομία among the common people, and writes: "It is not beyond probability that in the face of such an attitude Jesus, in certain circumstances, might be tempted to assert the validity of the Law. . . . May it not be conceivable then that Matt. 5:18 should find its *Sitz im Leben* in the ministry of Jesus?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 51f.) Cf. also Davies, *SSM*, p. 102, where Davies concludes, "The point is that in none of the antitheses is there an intention to annul the provisions of the Law but only to carry them to their ultimate meaning." Cf. A. M. Honeyman, "Matthew v. 18 and the Validity of the Law," *New Testament Studies* I (1954-55), pp. 142ff. Cf. also Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law" in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*. Barth says, "Matthew is less concerned to set the teaching of Jesus in opposition to the law of Sinai than to the Rabbinic interpretation of it. . . . It is difficult to see any justification for inferring a *nova lex*, since the ζυγός of Jesus does not indicate a new understanding of the law." (pp. 58f.).

²Matthew 5:17-19.

³Matthew 1:20, 24; 2:12, 13, 19; 4:11; 28:2-7.

not allow for explanation through dreams.¹ In at least these two cases God is said to have intervened in men's affairs by means of His angels, who performed His special tasks.

In another, much more general way, Matthew draws back the veil on God's acts on the scene of human affairs. One can see in the manner of the author's unfolding of Jesus' early years that Matthew has a confirmed faith in Divine Providence. There is no indication that God always uses the same means to accomplish what He pleases to do. Rather, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world finds relatively small place in the Gospel of Matthew;² and is supplemented by men (by which the author means men who are members of the Kingdom of Heaven). Men are given great responsibility in Matthew's Gospel, and do the work and will of God. Some excellent examples are Matt. 5:9; 5:13, 14, 16; 5:19; 5:44-45, 48; 7:21. A remarkable Matthaeian addition to Markan material is seen in Matt. 9:8, after Jesus had both forgiven the sins of the paralytic man and healed him. The crowds were afraid and they glorified God, according to Mark, but Matthew adds ". . . who had given such authority to men." Matthew evidently intends to portray here the concept that the crowd did not at that time recognize Jesus as anything more than a

¹Matthew 4:11, in which angels came to Jesus following the temptation and ministered to him; and the angel which Matthew says rolled back the stone, and who interpreted the resurrection to the women (Matt. 28:2-7).

²Matthew 10:20 seems to be the only instance of the believer's being directed by the Spirit.

remarkable man.¹

The most obvious act of God in the world is his initiative in communicating with men. Aside from God's communication through angelic beings, He has spoken through prophets.² But the whole of the Scriptures are communication from God. On the occasion of the first temptation, Jesus' words are reported in Luke, ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone." Only in Matthew is the Deuteronomic addition given: ". . . but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."³

On another occasion Jesus' words are recorded by Matthew in regard to the source of the law. "Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? . . . For the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God."⁴

It was the Father in Heaven who revealed to Peter the truth about Jesus' identity, according to Matthew's account

¹It is possible, however, that there is more to be said concerning this addition. It may be a further trace of the theology of forgiveness otherwise seen in Matt. 18:18; or it may be further comment on miracles worked by disciples (Matt. 10:1ff.), and by apostles in the post-Easter period. Matthew's addition is brief, and given without comment.

²Cf. the discussion above. Further references are Matt. 2:15 and 27:9, 10.

³Deuteronomy 8:3 says, "And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know; that man does not live by bread alone, but that man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord."

⁴Matthew 15:3, 4, 6. Mark's account differs little, other than use of the phrase, "For Moses said," where Matthew has, "For God commanded. . . ." Matthew thus accentuates the Divine source of the commandment.

of Peter's confession.¹ Here in a unique case Matthew seems to point to a special, direct, revelation by the Father Himself to one man, excepting all of the other disciples from that revelation. It is striking that no intermediary angel, dream, spirit, or other manifestation is mentioned. A special means of knowledge such as that of Peter would probably not have been considered necessary in the "age of the Holy Spirit" in the days of the early church.

All of this had relevance to the first readers of Matthew's Gospel account. What they believed concerning God had great importance for them in their ethical orientation. A child reared without discipline, and whose parent never corrects it, may not believe that right behavior is worth striving for. So, too, a people who believe that God never condemns evil--either because He is not close to His people, or because He is a God of love only and not also of holiness--may think that ethical demands are unwarranted and unnecessary. The readers of the Gospel according to Matthew, upon being convinced of the truth of what they read, would be inclined to place great importance upon ethical behaviour.²

Among the characteristics of God which are seen in the writings both of Matthew and of James, one stands out especially: God gives good things to men. Matthew's message is that the Heavenly Father does not only give

¹Matthew 16:17.

²Cf. the section on Eschatological Judgment, infra, pp. 206-228.

good gifts to good men. He does not withhold from unworthy people. "I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."¹ So, too, James speaks of an impartiality in a large part of God's giving: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him."² Again, James says, "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."³

¹Matthew 5:45.

²James 1:5. James is not so explicit as Matthew on gifts given to the evil as well as the good, but classes them together in the phrase, "who gives to all men generously." I take this verse to refer to God's liberality generally, and not to the bestowal of wisdom alone. (Cf. Mayor, James, p. 39). It is true that James speaks of the man who doubts as one who will receive nothing from the Lord; but he is the man who is διακρινόμενος; he has disputed the power or good-will of God, and therefore directly affronted him. It is the answer to his prayer which will be refused, though he will continue to receive good gifts otherwise (Jas. 1:17).

³James 1:17. Here, too, God's liberality is the subject. If it is "every good endowment and every perfect gift" which is from above, then God is liberal to all. Some men have greater misfortune than others, but all receive good gifts. James claims that they are from God. Tasker suggests a different construction, based on the slight distinction of δόσις and δώρημα: "it is probable that the words are not mere synonyms repeated for rhetorical emphasis, for no instance has been found in the papyri of the purely concrete use of the former. Assuming therefore the predicative force of good, the meaning may be that 'all giving is good' . . . and yet in comparison with God's gifts all other gifts lack perfection, and are always to some extent marred by impurity of motive. It is only from above, i.e. from heaven (see iii. 15; Jn. iii.

However, although there is a certain realm of liberality to all, especially of temporal blessings, yet both of the authors allow the impartiality of God's generous love for all men to exist in tension with his judgment on those who refuse his will and his way. James quotes a proverb, saying, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble,"¹ and a few verses later in the same context, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you." In so saying, it is obvious that James intends to place a certain limitation on God's willingness to exalt men: it is not available to everyone, but only to those who willingly humble themselves before God. In the realm of entering into the (eschatological) Kingdom (to use a Matthean term), God allows the imposition of special conditions. Yet the "double-minded," who does not ask in faith, ought not to expect even temporal gifts from the Lord (James 1:7).

The same sort of limitation of favor and gifts appears in Matthew's writing. In an encounter with the chief priests and elders, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."² In the Sermon on the Mount the words are

31), that every perfect gift comes." (Tasker, James, pp. 47f.).

¹James 4:6 (Cf. Proverbs 3:34 LXX).

²Matthew 21:31. Allen says, "In 'go before you into the kingdom' the meaning is not so much 'will go before you into the kingdom when it is inaugurated,' as 'obey God by fulfilling John's command to repent, submit to the divine will, take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom,

recorded, "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven."¹ In each of the five specific promises of reward in Matthew's sixth chapter² there is included the strong implication that the reward or blessing will be withheld from the person who does not meet the conditions. Even the generous promises which men have always recognized in the Beatitudes are offered only with quite specific conditions and requirements;³ and Matthew's account of the Lord's prayer ends with a strong demand that the petitioner maintain a forgiving spirit.⁴

In conclusion, then, both James and Matthew approach the idea of God from the standpoint of awe, induced by the demands of God. Both have a similar, recurring emphasis on eschatology, and particularly on judgment. In both documents the work of God is to be done by those who are

and become heirs of its promises.' In other words, the 'kingdom' here means rather the condition of preparedness for the coming kingdom than that future kingdom itself." (Allen, Matthew, p. 227) The meaning thus confirms the rule of God and His authority, especially emphasizing the need for proper response to God.

¹Matt. 7:21. Cf. Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, pp. 74, 162.

²Matthew 6:1, 4, 6, 18, 33.

³Matt. 5:3-12. Albright and Mann write: "The form which the individual verses take is well known in the Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In another form, it can easily be seen as an implied grammatical construction of protasis-apodosis (conditional and result clauses): 'If you do this, then that will follow.'" (Matthew, p. 42).

⁴Matthew 6:14f.

obedient to him, rather than through supernatural phenomena (yet there is the element of the miraculous in the Miracle Stories of Matthew, mirrored by the hope of miraculous healing in James 5:14-16).

Matthew's milieu, a Jewish-Christian community, possibly in Syria, is not far different from that of James; although there is an apparent lack of Gentile Christian admixture in the latter community.¹ In both works there is a strong exhortation to piety (e.g. "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you."--James 4:8. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.") but the call for piety is tempered by the call to action, to do God's work in the word in obedience to the will of God. God has provided good gifts: both James and Matthew emphasize this. He expects an appropriate response from persons who live under his goodness.

¹Cf. the section on the date and authorship of James, supra, pp. 1-65.

CHAPTER FIVE

LAW

LAW

The Gospel according to Matthew and the Epistle of James have both been frequently characterized as "legalistic." Luther's harsh criticism of the Epistle of James is partly based on his belief that James demanded a strict adherence to the law as a means of justification, and that it was therefore antithetical to Galatians, his favorite epistle--the "epistle of freedom."

Matthew's emphasis on righteousness demonstrated by "doing," as well as the important passages in the Sermon on the Mount which concern righteousness and the law have won it the reputation of a legalistic Gospel.¹

Upon examination, however, the apparently legalistic portions of the two documents do not give adequate grounds to dim the total message of the writings. They reveal, rather, that the writers made an honest attempt to wrestle with the problems which demanded resolution when the Christ

¹"Man is judged by performance rather than profession, and in accordance with his works," is the comment on at least Matthew's first great section by Sherman Johnson, The Theology of the Gospels (London: Duckworth, 1966), p. 56. Johnson goes on to say later, "the evangelist's legal . . . bent does not distract him from the heart of the gospel and the spirit of Jesus" (p. 64). Bultmann comments that Matthew "represents Jesus as the authoritative interpreter of the Law, or rather as the bringer of the new Torah." R. Bultmann, New Testament Theology, trans. by Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), II, p. 124.

of the kerygma was proclaimed as "the end of the law."¹

But it is apparent that Matthew made a serious attempt to present Jesus as he understood him--a preacher of radical demands which the Kingdom makes upon a disciple.²

The Sermon on the Mount is crucial in the understanding of Matthew's approach to the law. Particularly in 5:17-20 and in the Antitheses which conclude Chapter 5, Matthew outlines the teaching which appears in varied forms through the rest of the Gospel.

"Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I came not to destroy but to fulfil."³ By including these words of Jesus, Matthew presents an overarching principle by which the reader is to interpret the entire message of Jesus. He is not to be seen as an iconoclastic destroyer--but rather, all of the teaching which Matthew includes is to be seen as in some sense a "fulfilment." The paragraph in Matthew which begins with this sentence is variously considered to be either a reaffirmation of the permanent validity of the Mosaic Torah; or the announcement of a new age of "new Law;" or the declaration that Christ came to so fulfil the Law that it was no longer binding.⁴

¹Romans 10:4. Cf. Romans 8:1-4; Galatians 5:13, 14; Hebrews 7:11-14, 28; 10:1; and especially John 1:18 for other serious attempts to wrestle with this problem.

²Cf. especially G. Bornkamm in Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, pp. 24, 25, 30.

³Matthew 5:17.

⁴W. D. Davies, having considered the alternatives exegetically, concludes, "The verb 'to fulfil' in v. 17,

Several questions must be considered in the analysis of Matthew's attitude toward the Law. First of all, was there a school of thought within Judaism which considered the possibility of a change in the Torah to be legitimate--or was the Torah beyond any possibility of change? Davies has called attention to the discussion of this problem by Aptowitzer. Aptowitzer's discussion suggests that this question was indeed the subject of debate, for the most part having Pharisees and Sadducees as contending partisans.¹ Although Judaic politics were crucially involved, they forced a heated debate on the matter, with the Sadducees and the Hasmonaean party of the High Priests denying that the Torah could ever suffer change, while a party including some of the Pharisees insisted that in the Messianic age there would certainly be modification (or even the abrogation) of the Torah.²

Davies, as well, has indicated the strong likelihood that a New Law was included in Jewish thought,³ as part of

variously interpreted, is best taken, in the light of its total context, to mean 'to complete' or 'to bring to its desired end.' SSM, p. 100. Davies has a more complete discussion on the significance of the term in his book of essays, Christian Origins and Judaism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 32ff.

¹V. Aptowitzer, Parteipolitik der Hasmonäerzeit im rabbinischen und pseudepigraphischen Schrifttum (Vienna: Alexander Kohut Foundation, 1927), pp. 116f. Cf. the reference to this and Davies' summary in Davies, SSM, pp. 110f. Cf. also the reference to "different Torahs" in W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: S. P.C.K., 3rd ed., 1970), p. 144, n. 2.

²Davies, SSM, p. 111.

³Ibid. pp. 120ff.

the Messianic and eschatological framework. His argument is based, not upon late rabbinic writings, but upon evidence in eschatological passages in Jeremiah, Isaiah, and in the intertestamental literature.

The question which must be considered now is whether Matthew intended to portray the Sermon on the Mount, and other parts of the first gospel, as a new giving of Law. Much has been written on the presumed conscious parallel between the five major discourses of Jesus in Matthew and the five books of Moses;¹ but the parallelism is not so clear or close as to provide a strong probability for such a theory. The strongest single point of comparison is merely the number, 'five.' However, on other grounds of internal evidence it seems virtually certain that Matthew intended a parallel to be drawn, not between his writing and the Pentateuch, but between Jesus and Moses.² Matthew alone records the episode of the slaughter of the innocents, reminiscent of a similar atrocity which took place at the time of Moses' infancy. Both were perpetrated by royal decree. In both instances the chosen child was protected from death by parental act. At the end of his stay in Midian, "the Lord said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt: for all the men who were seeking your life are

¹Cf., as examples, Kilpatrick, op. cit., p. 136; Bacon, op. cit., pp. 80ff.; and R. V. G. Tasker, The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels (London: SCM Press, 1962), pp. 35ff.

²Davies notes a distinct measure of ambiguity, however. "He [i.e., Matthew] has cast around his Lord the mantle of a teacher of righteousness, but he avoids the express ascription to him of the honorific 'a New Moses.'" SSM, p. 108.

dead.'" And of the end of Jesus' period of stay in Egypt during infancy, Matthew records the angel's words, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."¹ Some scholars have seen comparisons between Jesus and Moses in Matthew's accounts of the Temptation, the Transfiguration, and in the feeding of the five thousand.² Though these passages have some points of comparison between Jesus and Moses, most are somewhat tenuous, and at best they may be used only to corroborate a theory already established rather than to serve as its foundation.³

There are, to be sure, elements which make it probable that the writer of the Gospel of Matthew bore in his mind

¹Exodus 4:18ff. compared with Matthew 2:19ff.

²Matthew's accounts of the temptation and of the feeding of the five thousand have few unique points over against the parallel Lucan accounts, and therefore it would be difficult to establish a case for specific Matthean "Moses" parallels. Further, the fact that in Matthew's account of the Transfiguration Moses is only one of two Old Testament figures to appear (and he is given no special recognition over Elijah) tends to actually diminish the natural comparison of Jesus with Moses in their respective mountaintop experiences. Matthew does indicate, with the addition of a single phrase ("and his face shone like the sun," 17:2) the meaning of the Marcan statement, "he was transfigured (μετεμορφώ η) before them (9:2), as Luke does with the phrase, "the appearance of his countenance was altered" (Lk. 9:29). This may be associated with the Moses story (Exodus 34:29, 30, 34, 35), in which "the skin of his face shone," although the annotation of Elwyn E. Tilden in the New Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version (eds. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 1258, says, "The aura of unnatural brilliance is associated with mystical experiences elsewhere (Ex. 34:29-35; Acts 9:3)."

³These passages, and a number of others which are less central to our present discussion, are discussed in Davies, SSM, pp. 14-93.

some comparison of Jesus with Moses; and therefore it can be assumed that the writer would have no aversion to the portrayal of Jesus as a new lawgiver.¹ This is quite evidently part of the significance of Matthew 7:24-29, and even more so the final verse of the Gospel: ". . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. . . ." ²

However much Matthew may have seen certain parallels between Jesus and Moses, it is certain that the evangelist intended these only to set the scene for the concept which was his key concern: if Jesus is a new Moses, he is not merely that, but much more. Moses may have had authority for his task of leadership from God; but Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. Moses may be the one to whom Israel looked back, but Jesus is the one to whom all the Scriptures looked forward.³ There can be a comparison

¹J. J. Collins, in his abstract of the article by R. Karpinski, "Wladza nauczycielska Chrystusa w Ewangelii sw. Mateusza (Christas Majester apud Mattheum)," Ruch Biblijny i Liturgiczny 22 (1969), pp. 206-213, calls attention to the parallel between Sirach 45:17 and Matthew 28:18, in the matter of authority. However, the statement in Sirach is wrongly interpreted as speaking of Moses, whereas it actually indicates the teaching authority given to Aaron. Instead of supporting the theory of a "new Moses," this passage would do no more than reinforce the concept that Jesus fulfils all leadership roles for the Kingdom. (Cf. New Testament Abstracts, 14 (1970), p. 157.

²Matthew 28:20.

³Jesus "came . . . to fulfil." The significance of πληρῶν in Matthew is best explained by reference to its use in 23:30-32: "And so you witness of yourselves, that you are some of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers." The emphasis is on an act in the present generation which gives present substance to an existing pattern. The same meaning of πληρῶν may be substituted in the "fulfilment-formula" sayings in

with Moses, but only insofar as Moses was a man chosen by God for a purpose. His purpose was still limited to leadership and lawgiving, while only Jesus is Lord.¹

Davies says,

The case would seem to be that, while the category of a New Moses and a New Sinai is present in v-vii, as elsewhere in Matthew, the strictly Mosaic traits in the figure of the Matthean Christ, both there and in other parts of the Gospel, have been taken up into a deeper and higher context. He is not Moses come as Messiah, if we may so put it, so much as Messiah, Son of Man, Emmanuel, who has absorbed the Mosaic function. The Sermon on the Mount is therefore ambiguous: suggestive of the Law of a New Moses, it is also the authoritative word of the Lord, the Messiah: it is the Messianic Torah.²

Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil." His mission is seen as fulfilment: but it is not merely law which he fulfils. Just as he did not come "to destroy [the validity of] the writings of the prophets," so the passage should be interpreted as declaring that he came to fulfil "the law and the prophets":³ that is, the

Matthew. Here too that usage would yield the sense, "Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came, not to destroy but to do that which will give new meaning (or present meaning) to a pattern which already exists." Cf. C. Dillman, πληρῶ in the Gospel of Matthew (unpublished Th.M. Thesis, Decatur, Georgia: Columbia Theological Seminary, 1968).

¹It is worth notice that in spite of the major task of teaching and preaching which Matthew includes, the disciples never call him "teacher," and only Judas calls him "Rabbi." This is in contrast to the other Gospels. But the constant Matthean address to Jesus by the disciples is "Lord."

²Davies, SSM, p. 93.

³The many "fulfilment" sayings in Matthew have as their major aim the establishment of the claims of Jesus on the world. It may well be that Matthew intended to show that

entire Old Testament pattern.¹

According to Matthew, Jesus saw himself in complete harmony with the unchanging will of God as expressed in Old Testament writings. But, qualifying this, Matthew's portrayal of Jesus is that of a Messiah who is able to declare authoritatively the intent of those writings,² stripping away the accretions of the generations of interpretation³ of the text to see the motivation behind its original form, and able to re-state that intent for his own generation. He is able to state principles which are

in Jesus specific predictions were fulfilled, but there is much more: he also intended to show that Jesus was the fulfilment of Israel's character and purpose as expressed through all the Old Testament writings. C. F. D. Moule, in his published address, "Fulfilment-words in the New Testament: use and Abuse," N.T.S. 14 (1967-68), pp. 293-320, has hit upon the correct summation of the fulfilment statements of Matthew, without attributing to the evangelist such a high intention. Cf. C. Dillman, op. cit., pp. 96ff.

¹Disagreeing with Davies, who says parenthetically, "the phrase 'the Law and the prophets' we take here, with most commentators, as a pleonasm for the Law itself." Davies, Christian Origins, p. 33. Cf. McNeile, who says, "the Law and the Prophets . . . comprise the Jewish Bible, the embodiment of God's moral requirements. . . . To annul them would be to annul the social and religious order of Jewish life." McNeile, Matthew, p. 58.

²Cf. Davies, SSM, pp. 101f.

³Charles E. Carlston, "The Things that Defile (Mark vii. 14) and the Law in Matthew and Mark," NTS, 15 (1968), pp. 80, 81, n. 6 brushes aside the observation made by R. Hummel [Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Mattäusevangelium, (Beiträge z. evang. Theol. 33; Munich: 1963), p. 71] of "rejection," by Jesus, of the Torah with its Rabbinic tradition. But the traditions and debates of the rabbis were so much a part of Jewish understanding of the Torah, that Hummel's point demands a hearing. Thus my distinction between the original form and the intent behind it.

virtues for every Christian;¹ to urge a better righteousness than that of those who keep the law in external observance; and to go beyond the very statements of the law themselves, to forbid improper internal attitudes or thoughts whether or not they are likely to lead one to commit the act which the law forbade.²

There is no abandonment of the decalogue in Matthew's gospel: rather, the commandments are still held up as a required model for behavior. But the follower of Jesus--the wise man who hears and does what the Lord has said--is to go much beyond the letter of the law, to its spirit or intent.³

Matthew does not leave his readers in the dark con-

¹The beatitudes (in large part), and the "golden rule" especially fit this category.

²Among the six so-called "antitheses," one is aimed at (presumably) rabbinic interpretations of law (Mat. 5:43) while in the sayings on murder and anger (5:21ff.), on adultery (5:27f.), divorce (5:31), swearing (5:33; but see on this the discussion *infra*, Chap. X), and on retribution (5:38), the saying is a radicalization of the original prescription of the law.

Daube writes, of the antitheses: "these declarations... are intended to prove Jesus the Law's upholder, not destroyer. The relationship between the two members of the form is not one of pure contrast; the demand that you must not be angry with your brother is not thought of as utterly irreconcilable with the prohibition of killing. On the contrary, . . . it is thought of as, in a sense, resulting from and certainly including the old rule; it is the revelation of a fuller meaning for a new age. The second member unfolds rather than sweeps away the first." (D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (London: Athlone, 1956), p. 60.

³This is the reason Matthew has included the phrase "the Law or the prophets" (5:17). Regarding intent, Carlston speaks of "the abandoning of certain prescriptions of the law (not the whole of it!) if the actions substituted more perfectly reflected God's will, which was the original intent of the law." op. cit., p. 79.

cerning the actual intent, or over-riding principles, behind the law. He has included in his version of the golden rule, "for this is the law and the prophets"¹; and to the two great commandments on loving God and one's neighbor he added, "in these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."² Matthew is concerned with the establishment of righteousness; but on the other hand not merely a righteousness of the law. He is aware of the aberrations which are possible while still keeping within the prescriptions of the law. He gives in chapter five one prime example: you shall love your neighbor--and hate your enemy! The Church saw clearly that love was the crux of the law, and that love also summed up the will of God.³ Davies says,

The point is that in none of the antitheses is there an intention to annul the provisions of the Law but only to carry them to their ultimate meaning. . . .

¹Matthew 7:12. This distinctive phrase is found only once in Luke, in 16:16 ("The law and the prophets were until John"). Luke's more usual terminology seems to be "Moses and the prophets" (16:29, 31; 24:27, 45) in description of the (O. T.) Scriptures; while Matthew uses the combination "law and the prophets" four times, three of which have no synoptic parallel. The phrase is found in Acts ("after the reading of the law and the prophets," 13:15; and in a form which differs in 24:14) and once in Paul, Romans 3:21 ("But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it").

The phrase was obviously not unique to Matthew, but in this text is likely to have been added to his source [Cf. Francis W. Beare, The Earliest Records of Jesus: A Companion to the Synopsis of the First Three Gospels (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 67.]

²Matthew 22:40. That Matthew has added the phrase "the Law and the prophets" in both cases is assured in view of the fact that this passage is from the Marcan source, while the "golden rule" is from Q.

³Thus it is not only Matthew, but also Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and James who included the theme of the Great Commandment of love.

We cannot speak of the Law being annulled . . . but only of it being intensified in its demand, or reinterpreted in a higher key.¹

Many of the statements of Matthew concerning the law are ambiguous; and some of them appear to be contradictory to others.² A part of this phenomenon may be blamed on variance between Matthew's sources;³ but there may be other ways to interpret the evangelist rightly. One approach to Matthew's use of law which must not be ignored in this connection is the crucial emphasis which the evangelist places upon the Kingdom.⁴

The orientation of the Gospel of Matthew is not really one which declares a rule of law, but a Kingdom: its citizens are responsible persons who are expected to take very seriously the demands and the wishes of the King. The Kingdom is a reign rather than a realm:⁵ it claims unswerving allegiance from its subjects.

Matthew firmly establishes the centrality of the love-

¹Davies, SSM, p. 102.

²Cf. the observation made concerning other elements in Matthew (i.e., the Scribes and Pharisees; "particularism"- "universalism") in Christian Origins, pp. 31, 34.

³As, for example, Carlston does with his distinction between 5:17 and 18. Cf. also Davies, Christian Origins, p. 31.

⁴Matthew, of course, normally prefers to use the phrase "kingdom of heaven," but in four places (or possibly five, depending on textual variants) he does use the phrase common to the other writers, "kingdom of God." This variation appears to have no significance to the writer, and I conclude that he uses the terms with no discrimination other than personal preference and custom. Cf. K. L. Schmidt, βασιλεία TDNT, pp. 581f.

⁵Ibid. The focus is therefore on the person of the King, rather than on the territory ruled.

commandment, as also do other New Testament witnesses. This becomes the key-note for understanding all that Matthew has to say concerning the law. But it is the law of the Kingdom, and therefore not to be compared directly with rabbinic teaching. Thus, for example, Carlston writes,

when one compares carefully what Matthew says with rabbinic comments on the same concerns he finds basically a different spirit, not merely in the Christology, where we should expect it, but also in his attitude toward the keeping of legal precepts in general. The centrality of the love-commandment is so important and the exegetical freedom with which he employs it so striking that we can only conclude that his differences with what became rabbinic Judaism, so obvious to us, must to some extent have been deliberate.¹

The rule of the Kingdom is intensely personal.² Jesus' extension of the sixth and seventh commandments (Matt. 5:21f., 27f.) to declare them broken by hatred of a person, or a look of strong desire, places these commandments outside the realm of any sanctions of state or society. Keeping them or breaking them is a matter purely between an individual person and the Lord, the ruler of the Kingdom.³

¹Carlston, op. cit., p. 88.

²It is common in the present generation to emphasize the corporate quality of Christianity over against an individualism which sees little responsibility for distant injustice. However it must be recognized that Matthew integrates these two elements. He places the Kingdom at a very personal level in his report of the Sermon on the Mount--but with strong social responsibility.

³The tenth commandment, against coveting, may be compared with this sort of internalizing. Even here covetousness nearly always manifests itself in recognizable ways, while that is not necessarily the case with Matthew 5:22, 28. Yet there is, of course, a similarity. Hill comments, "The intensification or Messianic sharpening of the sixth commandment (concerning adultery) is presented in terms of the tenth (concerning covetousness, and desire for what is not one's own)." Hill, Matthew, p. 123.

The Kingdom of God was one of the primary emphases of Jesus.¹ Matthew pushes this emphasis to the fore by his collection of the parables of the Kingdom into one place, in the thirteenth chapter; by repeated intimations concerning the Kingdom in chapters 11-12; and by his prominent declaration of the Kingdom within the Sermon on the Mount, where also are found the principles of Jesus, the doing of which separates the wise man from the foolish. It is in the Sermon particularly that the connection between Jesus' principles and the Kingdom must not be severed.

Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness.

Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.²

It is important to note that in each of these four places the connection of the Kingdom with righteousness, or with "doing," is uniquely Matthean.³

The rule of the Kingdom is based first of all upon the will of God, then upon love and mercy. But whereas the will of God might be thought of in legalistic terms

¹Cf. W. D. Davies, SSM, p. 431.

²Matthew 5:20, 6:10, 6:33, 7:21.

³Matthew 5:20 has no synoptic parallel; in the Lucan version of the Lord's prayer the statement is simply, "Thy Kingdom come"; Luke 12:31 says, "however you must seek his Kingdom and these things will be yours as well"; and in Luke 6:46 while there is emphasis on doing what Jesus says, the Kingdom is not included.

and in terms of a limitless number of laws and rules to govern an infinite number of cases, love and mercy--which ultimately cannot be divorced from the will of God--tend to be stated in simple and very general terms. Statements such as "love your neighbor as you love yourself," or "do to others as you would wish them to do to you" are as close as one might come to precision in saying "let love and mercy rule." According to Matthew, Jesus came with the ἐξουσία of God. Within this context, then, he claimed the full power to declare authoritatively the rule of the Kingdom. His was the task of providing whatever balance was demanded between rules, "laws,"¹ on the one hand, and the tempering elements of love and mercy, on the other.²

Matthew's inclusion of rules, then, appears to be made for the sake of the Kingdom. These concepts are a new law which now clarifies and sharpens the old; but they are

¹The very term "laws" must be used with caution in terms of the Gospel of Matthew, especially if one does not see Matthew as the exposition of a new Torah, but as the exposition of the Kingdom.

²The suggestion of Krister Stendahl, that the Gospel of Matthew was produced by a "Christian Rabbi" or Scribe as a manual of instruction for Christian leaders in a Scribal School does not in itself presuppose a school of new legalism. In fact, the very principles of love, mercy, and consideration which Matthew consistently sets forth can best be learned by seeing them in action in such a community setting as a "School of Matthew" might have provided.

The suggestion of such a school for the training of Christian teachers and leaders is feasible. Likewise Stendahl's comparison of such a setting and method with the Qumran practice is suggestive. Even here, however, a legalism such as that of the Essenes is not indispensable to the structure of such a school and is contrary to the genius of the Sermon on the Mount and other parts of Matthew's Gospel. Cf. K. Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew, pp. 34ff., 183ff.

there to support what Matthew says about life in the Kingdom. With the old established order there was certainly place for love and mercy;¹ but one could ignore them with impunity when a "law" appeared on the scene applying in some way to the circumstance. Within the new order, love is to be normative, with all else to be of major consideration only after the demand of love is met.² The decalogue is reaffirmed in Matthew's Gospel: it is not done away, but the citizen of the Kingdom is to be guided in his keeping even of this universal Law by the overriding principle of agape, a love which is the "pure, unlimited self-giving which is exemplified by Jesus."³

This concept of Law and ethic in Matthew's Gospel, particularly tempered as it is by the order of the Kingdom, should be helpful for our later consideration of the concept of "doing the word" in the Epistle of James.

There is a minimum of mention of the Kingdom in James: in 1:12 it may be hinted at in reference to "the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him"--although the connection between "crown" and "kingdom" is

¹Jesus' criticism of scribes and Pharisees often took this tack, and especially in Matt. 23:23 (with parallel Luke 11:42), where the minute observance of some laws did not lead to observance of the law's weightier matters, justice, mercy, and faith (Luke: "justice and the love of God").

²In Matthew 22:34-40, this principle is given formal expression. Parallels to this are Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25-29. W. D. Davies, "Ethics in the New Testament," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible (New York and Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1962), concludes that love was the essence of the ethical teaching of Jesus (pp. 168, 169).

³W. D. Davies, SSM, p. 431.

quite tenuous. James 2:8 speaks of the law of love as the "royal" law--certainly because it was given by the King. There is only one explicit reference to the Kingdom: in 2:5 James says, "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?" This last reference is clear, though not fully explained. In passing, one should note the parallel phrase, in 1:12 and 2:5, "which he has promised to those who love him." "The crown of life" and "the kingdom" are both given by promise.

Although it is often said that the law is scarcely a subject of discussion in James, certain observations may be made. The Decalogue comes into focus explicitly only in one passage, i.e., 2:8, 9. In this passage James speaks of failing to keep the law. The terms of the discussion are reminiscent of Paul's diatribe in Romans 2:12-25 (" . . . all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law." . . . "You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?")

Elsewhere in James it is evident that it is not the Ten Commandments about which the writer is concerned. The "royal law" in 2:8 is explained, i.e., "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The parallel with Matthew is obvious, though James shows the same kinship with other portions of the New Testament,¹ as well as with Leviticus 19:18,

¹The same command is found in Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; Mark 12:31; and Luke 10:27. Thus James shows his kinship with the ethic of other portions of the New Testament. The approach of James to the law is not set in relation to Christ as it is in Matthew

from which this statement of principle comes.

We have said that Matthew's approach to the law turns continually to the law of love for its rationale. At least in 2:8-13, this is also the controlling motif in James. The passage at hand begins with reference to the "royal law" of love; moves to the idea of partiality (which had been introduced in 2:1); then to the integrity of law ("whoever . . . fails in one point has become guilty of all of it"); on to the imperative of speaking and acting "as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty"; and ends with an exhortation to mercy: "mercy triumphs over judgment." The passage is an explicit parenetic passage on the necessity of love and mercy as virtues of the reader. The emphasis is not on the Old Testament law, though it is recognized as valid ("Do not commit adultery." "Do not kill. "). But the reader is to look beyond these commands to the law of love and the principle of mercy.¹

James begins the passage with mention of "the royal law." Further in the same context he writes of "the law of liberty"--evidently the same law, in view of the introduction of mercy in the sentence following. The same phrase, "the law of liberty" (called also "the perfect law"), occurs elsewhere in James (1:25). Absolute certainty is not possible, but the strongest probability is that

but the appeal is to consistency of action with the principle of law's summation in love, quite similar to that in the Romans and Galatians passages listed here.

¹Cf. Matthew 23:23, Matthew's "weightier matters of the law."

there the meaning is the same law of love.

One other passage in James speaks of law. Here too the law of love fits the context. "He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law" (4:11). Is a brother then equated with the law? One recalls the first of the Antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount ("every one who is angry with his brother . . . insults his brother . . . says, 'You fool!'. . . ."), and the severe punishment for such words and attitudes. The reasoning behind the Matthean Antithesis is that such anger and such speaking contradicts the principle which Matthew sees underlying the law.¹ The passage in James bypasses the Old Testament law and goes directly to the principle. It may be paraphrased as follows: "He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, denies the validity of the law of love and sits in judgment over that law. But if you sit in judgment over the law of love, your concern is in judging rather than practicing it."

The orientation of James to the Law is neither detailed nor explicit. Nevertheless, it is evident that the guiding principle for his thought is focused like an ellipse, in two places: in God² and in neighbor. Because these two

¹Supra, pp.132ff. It must also be recognized that Matthew's expositions on the law are always set in relation to Christ, and the antitheses particularly are in the context of the "fulfilment" passage (Matthew 5:16-20), in which Jesus is the one who came to fulfil. James lacks this Christological interpretation for the Law.

²Cf. Chapter IV, supra, pp. 102-122.

foci were also the substance of Jesus' summation of the law,¹ we may on the one hand see a close similarity between the message of James and that of the interpretation by the synoptic gospels of Jesus. We have commented earlier in this section on the controlling factors for Matthew's ethic, particularly as he amplifies the ethics which he has in common with Mark and Luke, in his own interpretation of Jesus' teaching, that the Law was less a factor than the Kingdom (comprised of the dual factors of the will of God; and love and mercy). James' approach to God may here be summed up as an exhortation to honor God: an idea which is congruent with Matthew's idea of duty to the will of God. Thus, in this way James bears both a general likeness to the Jesus of the synoptics, and a more specific likeness to the demand on the believer which is found in the Gospel of Matthew.

¹Matthew 22:37-40 and parallels.

CHAPTER SIX

FAITH

FAITH

Faith in the Epistle of James

One of the primary elements of confusion to readers of the Epistle of James is the use James makes of the words πίστις, πιστός. The confusion is unfortunate, because while on the one hand James uses πίστις in two different ways, on the other it seems clear he has written with intention to clarify this very thing--how the reader ought to understand faith.

James introduces the concept faith in 1:3, and uses the concept some sixteen times, with the verbal form in two of these. All but five of these sixteen occurrences of the words are clustered in the latter half of the second chapter, with two others earlier in the same chapter.

In order to understand what James means by faith it is clear then, that we will need to examine carefully the faith-works diatribe (James 2:14-26); but let us first look at the other passages in which the word πίστις occurs (1:3, 6; 2:1, 5; 5:15).

James 1:3 "knowing that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness . . ." Here faith is more than assent to a creed or propositional statement, obviously. It can be tested, and as it is there is the expected benefit of endurance or steadfastness. The context does not in itself give clues to say a great deal more than that

faith is an integral part of life of the persons to whom James writes. The author merely introduces the subject here, without defining it.

James 1:16, A man who lacks wisdom must ask from God, who gives to all without reservation . . . but "he must ask in faith, not at all wavering, and it shall be given to him." Here is a minor parallel with Matthew 21:21, in which Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not waver (ἐάν ἔχητε πίστιν καὶ μὴ διακρίθητε . . .) you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain . . ." The similarity of contrasting πίστις with διακρίνομαι in both James and Matthew helps to clarify the significance of πίστις. It carries the sense of rock-hard confidence in the power and will of God in both instances--although the Matthean context presupposes, rather than states, that God is in the event.

Interestingly enough, neither of these two verses states that faith is to be placed in Jesus, but in the latter verse, James 1:6, the object of faith is God.

At the beginning of chapter two, on the other hand, the tone changes. Here it becomes not a confidence in God, but a way of life centered around Jesus Christ. "My brothers, you must have the faith of our Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ--but not in discrimination of persons." Here the faith is a way of life, and it must be consistent with itself. It must not have a servile regard for the importance of certain individuals, but must gauge itself

by the purpose and spirit of the Lord of glory himself.¹

The point of the paragraph is the total equality in the Christian community. No man, because of his wealth or status outside the συναγωγή should be favored within the fellowship over any other man.² Persons in charge of seating arrangements who make such choices are accused by James: have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges of evil reasonings?

This section seems to set the tone for definition of faith, which will follow in verses 14-26. And James continues, with the same reasoning: "Listen, my dear brothers, has God not chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him? But you have taken honor away from the poor man." (2:5, 6a)

Verse five has an echo of the first of both the Matthean and Lucan Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew); Blessed are you poor, for your is the kingdom of God (Luke). This similarity will be discussed more fully in a later chapter,³ but here merely let it be said that James has associated the earth's poor with the heritage of the kingdom in a way which appears closer to Luke than to Matthew; and in so doing he may be reporting one version of an authentic say-

¹Mayor paraphrases, "How is this regard for worldly distinctions consistent with your belief in Christ, the only glory of believers?" (*op. cit.*, p. 211). Cf. Schlatter, *Jakobus*, pp. 163f.

²Schlatter, *Jakobus*, p. 167.

³*Infra*, pp. 253-256.

ing of Jesus. The saying appears to have been known in more than one part of the early tradition.¹

James has here advanced the concepts included in Matthew and Luke by investing poverty with the idea of divine sonship. God has chosen heirs² and these heirs are from among those who are poor "in the world." It may be in consolation for their worldly poverty that they are chosen;³ or it may be more simply that they have not the distraction of riches to turn them away from trusting beyond themselves--in God--for their well-being.⁴ Whether realistic or not, such is the image James has of the abundantly

¹Matthew 25:34 also uses the concept of inheritance of the kingdom: "Come, you who are blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. . . ."

²Cf. Westcott, Hebrews, pp. 167ff. Westcott traces the use of κληρονόμος in Biblical sources and indicates that especially in the New Testament "the word is commonly used in connection with the blessing . . . which belongs to divine sonship."

³Cf. Mayor, James, p. 87.

⁴The theme of the spiritual poverty of the materially rich is common in non-Pauline sections of the New Testament. Certainly James (1:10, 11; 2:5, 6; 5:1, 2) recurrently warns against trusting in wealth and of the judgment which will come to the wealthy as it will to all who seek to control their own affairs without reference to God; (cf. 4:13ff.) but the Synoptics (Mt. 13:22; 19:23f; Mk. 10:25; Lk. 1:53; 16:19ff; passim) and the Revelation (3:17f.) also contain this philosophy of wealth. Luke's gospel sees the rich as an enemy force--not merely men who happen to be wealthy, but men who are opposed to Jesus and his followers--somewhat akin to John's use of the term "the Jews." The use of Matthew and Mark is radical and eschatological; and here, too, James appears to incorporate both the Lucan and the Matthean concepts. In James sometimes the rich are the enemies of Christians (5:1ff., 2:6f.), and at times they seem to be incorporated as members of the Christian community (1:9ff; 2:1ff.), albeit members who need exhortation concerning their possessions.

compensating benefits of poverty.

The last in sequence of the epistle's statements on faith is found in 5:15. This is the exhortation for the man who is ill to call for the elders of the church¹ to "pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith (ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως) will save the sick man; and the Lord will raise him up."

Here the faith may have been exercised in the sick man in calling for the elders themselves. It is they who pray; and "the prayer of faith" will save him.²

At the beginning of the paragraph, to be sure, James had included the case of a man who was "afflicted" (A.V.). Such a man is exhorted to pray. The word here is κακοπαθέω, a term used only four times in the NT--twice in this chapter and twice in the Second letter to Timothy.³ But the probability is heavily against this man's being identified as the man for whom the elders pray, on two scores: first, the meaning of κακοπαθέω does not specify illness, but rather "suffering misfortune", or "bearing hardship patiently."⁴ Though illness could be described so, the term does not demand such an interpretation.⁵ Further, between the exhortation to the man who is suffering misfortune and

¹James' only use of the term ἐκκλησία is here. Otherwise (in 2:2) he speaks of the assembly as συναγωγή.

²Mayor, James, pp. 173, 232f.

³II Timothy 2:9 and 4:5 in verbal form and James 5:10 as a noun, in addition to the present context.

⁴Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 398.

⁵Cf. Mayor, James, p. 169.

that for the sick (who is described both as ἀσθενεῖ and τὸν κἀμνοντα) is the challenge to the man who is cheerful or in good spirits--εὐθυμεῖ: he should sing praise.

The point of all this is that faith is able to be exercised by the believing community--if one may use that term for the church--by a part of that community, on behalf of a member who is in need. The faith which is thus exercised will have its proper effect.

This kind of faith is not defined in this passage by the writer, but it must include trust in the effective power of God. It is further illustrated by the example of Elijah, who prayed first for drought, and later for rain. This illustration is included to encourage belief in supernatural power,¹ though δύναμις and related concepts do not appear.

With these introductory statements, now let us move on to the most difficult section of the Epistle of James: the passage on faith and works (2:14-26).

The form is that of an essay, dwelling on the contrast which he had noted in the first chapter between true and false religion (1:26f.): here the term under consideration is faith. In that earlier passage, James exposed the antithesis between the thought of a man who considered himself "religious" but whose tongue was not bridled and whose heart was (thereby) deceived. Such "religion" is

¹The point of James' inclusion of the example of Elijah (James 5:17f.) is naturally to provide an example of the sort of faith which attempts--and expects--great things.

vain; empty. James went on to describe what sort of "religion" is acceptable and full of genuine content in terms which describe acts of mercy and purity.

Likewise, in the passage presently at hand, James speaks of the self-deception involved in a person who says he has faith, but the mercy--which for James is always an expression of faith--is absent. Such faith is without profit,¹ empty and uninvolved,² and in fact it is dead.³

The passage at hand has received more attention, and less complete agreement, than almost any paragraph in the Epistle. The statement of Paul in Romans 3:28 seems to be the focal point of the issue: "For we hold that a man is

¹James 2:14, 26.

²James 2:20, accepting the reading ἀργή.

³James 2:17, 26. Commentators have often pointed out that James' approach to works is foreign to that part of the early church which was influenced by the Apostle Paul. Although admittedly his use of terminology was quite different, it should be pointed out that Paul would have nothing good to say about a "faith" which did not issue in right conduct and right living. Dibelius points out in his essay "Glaube und Werke bei Paulus und Jakobus" (in Der Brief Des Jakobus, pp. 215ff.), that Paul uses the word "faith" in Romans 1:5, 8; I Cor. 2:5; Phil. 1:25; Col. 1:4; and in other places as a "stichwort für die Zugehörigkeit zur gemeinschaft der Christen." As such, the concept of faith could be cheapened in its content so that its adherents might include some whose whole manner of life contradicted the whole-life change expected of Christians--who were to be 'circumcised in heart', living every minute under the Lordship of Jesus.

Paul's concern is that Gentile Christians should not feel bound to ceremonial law, circumcision, and other Jewish rites to gain acceptance from God (Dibelius, p. 219); while the works in which James is interested are those inherent in Paul's usual doctrine of faith itself. We must only understand that if Paul occasionally uses faith as a code-word to signify membership in the Christian community, he has the same concept of faith, in one of its senses, as we find in James 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 24, and 26. It is James' concern to correct such a misuse of the term.

justified by faith apart from works of law." James, in his closest approach to this thought says, "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone." (2:21)

Theories to explain the similarity or lack of similarity between James and Paul in these two passages range from the comment of Ropes, "that James wrote after Paul's doctrine had become well known to the church must be admitted, for he quotes exactly Paul's formula,"¹ through the suggestion by Moffatt that James "is attacking either some ultra-Paulinists or certain people who appealed to Paul's teaching about faith as justifying a religious belief which did not need moral exercise,"² through the view that James' concept of justification has a viewpoint limited almost exclusively to the final judgment,³ to the view that James has developed his statement in complete independence of Paul's doctrine.⁴ The variety is completed with the view of Mayor, that the similarities are to be explained

¹Ropes, James, p. 35. Cf. my earlier treatment of Faith and Works in James and Paul in Chapter II, pp. 27f. 39-47.

²James Moffatt, The General Epistles: James, Peter, and Judas (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), p. 43. Cf. also G. R. Beasley-Murray, Bible Guides: The General Epistles (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), p. 28; Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 288f.

³Cf. Robert Johnstone, Lectures on the Epistle of James (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Book House, 1954), pp. 216f.

⁴Cf. Reicke, p. 32: "Once again it is clear that the deeds approved are not technical observances, but acts of love. In this connection it is quite impossible to speak of any direct or indirect contradiction of Paul. . . ." Cf. also Cadoux, op. cit., pp. 27ff., A. Meyer, Rätzel, p. 107f., John Bowker, The Targums and Rabbinic Literature (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), p. 232.

on the basis of St. Paul's familiarity with the Epistle of James.¹

It has been said that James "does not state distinctly what he means by 'faith.'"² On the contrary, it appears evident that the very purpose of James 2:14-26 is to clarify what he does mean by "faith." He approaches the subject negatively, positing a common understanding of faith. Reicke says,

It must be noted that in vs. 14 the discussion is about a person who only asserts that he has faith. This person has no real faith, since his faith does not find expression in deeds. The author does not take issue with faith itself, but with a superficial conception of it which permits faith to be only a formal confession.³

This passage is wide-ranging in its approach. It seeks support for its main idea first in a hypothetical case--a brother or sister hungry or inadequately dressed, to whom a man professing faith gives a blessing and two exhortations: "Go in peace; be warm; be filled." The words are there, perhaps also the attitude of mind which wants the unfortunate person to have a better lot, but there is no personal move to give help. James uses the term "faith" in this paragraph, but makes clear that it is not real faith at all: it is dead, by itself.

From this hypothetical situation, the writer moves on to another. A person (τις) will say, "You have faith and

¹Mayor, James, pp. xci, xcvi, ff.

²Ibid., p. xcvi.

³Reicke, op. cit., p. 32.

I have works.¹ Show me your 'faith without works' and I will show you faith by my works. James is here expressing through an imaginary objector that any believer who has no works stemming from faith is not only resting on inadequate faith, but he is open to embarrassing verbal attack by others. James does not attempt to specify who the objector is; he is merely concerned that these thoughts come home to the persons who claim faith.

A third technique which James utilizes in order to convince his readers that there is no faith worthy of the name which is not accompanied by works, is a reference to the demons. He pictures them as having a firm belief that God is one--just like the belief of these readers--but they are still demons. They shudder, but there is no positive benefit from their belief. Here is the place James has drawn a line: it is possible to "believe" without

¹Verse 18 has been the subject of a great deal of discussion and dispute. Is the hypothetical person quoted an enemy of James' personal position? It would seem not, since he is quoted as having works, the very thing James is after in his readers. Is τῷ an ally, then, of James? This is uncertain, and several commentators, including Zahn, have supposed him to be a non-Christian partisan against the position of James' readers, who would be able to embarrass them. For a fuller discussion of a variety of positions on the identity of the imagined speaker, cf. Ropes, op. cit., pp. 208-214. Part of the difficulty in interpretation stems from the problem of whether one should close the objector's words with the first sentence of verse 18 or attribute to him the entire verse (Ibid., p. 208, Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 195ff.). Cf. Dibelius, Jakobus, pp. 190ff. in which the problem is treated at some length. The simplest solution is to take the entire first sentence of verse 18 as the objection of an opponent, whose statement may be taken to mean, "one person (οὗ . . . ἐγὼ as approximately equivalent to ὁ μὲν . . . ὁ δέ) has faith, another, works." (Ropes, p. 211; Mayor, p. 100; cf. also Blackman, pp. 92f.).

having faith; there is something called faith in One God¹ which, for James, is not worthy of the name faith. Even the demons (τὰ δαιμόνια) have that sort of "faith,"² and it only causes them to shudder.³ Such a faith is empty: it does not save.

A fourth argument advanced by James in demonstrating that faith is only faith when it is demonstrated in works is a dual reference to two of the heroes of Israel, recognized as representatives of the faith which saves, Abraham, and Rahab the harlot of Jericho (cf. Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19, 31). They are recognized as persons who believed, by other New Testament writers (cf. Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19, 31; Romans 4; John 8:39-56): here James points out carefully that they were not mere believers, but their faith was given substance by their actions. They may rightly be called "faithful," since they acted upon the things they believed to be true, casting themselves upon their belief and excluding dependence upon all else. It

¹Belief in the existence and unity of God is certainly thought of as the chief element in true faith (cf. Heb. 11:6). The reference is to the common recital of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4), "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (cf. Mark 12:29). After such a necessary beginning, if the faith does not go further it is mere assent to doctrine--"orthodoxy"--and is dead.

²Cf. Ropes, p. 215.

³There is no hint in this passage, or elsewhere in James, of the specific activity of demons. James only asserts the existence of such beings, that they know ("believe") about God, and that they shudder--implying that they are not in accord with the purpose of God, and we may infer that they will come under some sort of condemnation, thus the reason for their reaction. James speaks of earthly wisdom as being "demonic" (δαίμονιῳδης, 3:15). Cf. Foerster, "δαίμων" TDNT, II, pp. 12-18.

is this sort of action that is the life of true faith, in the thought of James.

In the case of Abraham, James refers to his offering up his son upon the altar, omitting the act which is included by Paul--begetting Isaac in spite of the former barrenness of Sarah.¹ Neither does James include as an example of Abraham's faith the incident referred to by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews--that Abraham obeyed when told to leave his father's house and to go to an unknown land²--nor does James include the interpretation of Abraham's thought in regard to the offering of Isaac which we see in Hebrews: "He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead."³ James places the statement, "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" as a general benediction over the life of Abraham, wresting it from its original context⁴ and applying it to the later incident, to which he has referred.⁵ It is worth noting at this point that James has here used

¹Romans 4:17-22. In fact, it is the belief that he would beget a son, or more specifically, that he was to have a multitude of descendents, that seems to be the point of Genesis 15:6 in its context.

²Hebrews 11:8ff. Interestingly enough, in this passage the faith for conception of Isaac is attributed to Sarah (Heb. 11:11), in contrast to the statement of Paul (Rom. 4:17ff.).

³Hebrews 11:19.

⁴Genesis 15:6, referring to the promise of a son. Cf. Reicke, op. cit., p. 34.

⁵Cf. Blackman, pp. 93f., Ropes, p. 221f. Note, however, that James is following ordinary Jewish interpretation (Ropes, p. 222), rather than advancing new theory.

one of the techniques of the Gospel of Matthew: ". . . faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.'" It has been observed that Matthew's "fulfillment passages" (1:21, 2:15, 8:17, 12:17, 21:4, passim) seldom, if ever, deal squarely with the original intent of the Old Testament passage, but are lifted out of their context to be applied with some new meaning. The solution to this problem, I believe, is in Matthew's understanding of the word πληρώω. He takes it in an early sense of "to fill up," and thus sees "fulfillment" as necessarily giving new content to an old word--in most of these cases the old word was that of the Old Testament passages involved.¹

James has used a technique similar to that of Matthew: the words, "And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness," originally refer to the promise of descendents numbered as the stars of heaven (Genesis 15:5f.). That Abraham followed the command which he perceived God to be giving is sufficient evidence to James that the same implicit trust in God is the motivating factor in the later action; and so James makes application

¹One key passage to note in comprehending Matthew's understanding of the word πληρώω is Matthew 23:29-36, especially noting verse 32: "καὶ ὑμεῖς πληρώσατε τὸ μέτρον τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν." The measure (of the sins) of their fathers is seen almost as if it were an empty shell, or vessel, which can be filled up anew by the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. On this subject cf. Charles Dillman, The Use of πληρώω in the Gospel of Matthew. (unpublished thesis for Th.M. degree (Decatur, Georgia: Columbia Theological Seminary, 1968).

of the earlier words (which concerned a different incident) and he accompanied his quotation with the prefixed formula, "and the scripture was fulfilled (filled up again?) which says . . ."

There was a Jewish school of thought which conceived of the faith of Abraham as itself a "work." Paul's interpretation was completely different,¹ but it is not difficult to see how the thought of James, if it pre-dates the writings of Paul² could be derived from such a (pre-Christian) Jewish understanding.

James' reference to Rahab, and his specific description of her as "the harlot" is apparently included for contrast, and to provide a further appeal to personal application--a man who felt that he could never achieve such a work of faith as Abraham had (in offering an only son upon an altar) must have been corrected in his thinking when he was faced with the commendation of a simple act of deception by a prostitute.³ The fact of the deception itself is not mentioned by James, but the fact that it was motivated by her faith that God was able to accomplish the threatened destruction of such a fortified city is an important point. James leaves little room to doubt that her action was the right thing to have done, on the basis of such a faith--that her actions sprang naturally from

¹Ernst Käsemann, An die Römer (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973), pp. 99-106.

²Cadoux, op. cit., pp. 27f.

³Cf. Tasker, James, p. 71.

faith.

The reader is left to imagine for himself in this case what would have happened had Rahab believed but not acted on her belief.¹ The answer is rather obvious, in that the Israelite spies would have been captured.

In summary, in this major passage on faith and works James seeks to qualify very carefully what he means by faith. (1) He indicates that what some people mean by the word faith is a profitless, unemployed, and even dead acceptance of dogma and doctrinal statement. (2) Secondly, he counters the proposal that "faith" (without works) is a viable Christian option. (3) Such a belief is common even in "demons," but it has no salutary effect. Is that the sort of "faith" which will be helpful in the eschatological upheaval? (4) Finally, he indicates that the sort of faith which is worthy of the name is the sort which has a dynamic of action, such as that expressed by Abraham and Rahab. Any belief worthy of the name faith will be accompanied by a manner of living which is controlled by mercy, truth, and justice.

Of the other passages in James where the word faith appears, none of them is incompatible with this designation, although the two which make faith a necessary con-

¹One might ask similar questions of the example of Abraham, but without so clear-cut an answer. Abraham's example was the obvious one to use in speaking of faith, in light of the common use of Genesis 15:6 in the teaching of the church: on the other hand, James has well qualified his main point in this passage, illustrated by the use of Rahab's action.

dition of meaningful and effective prayer¹ are not so specific, nor is the statement that God chose the poor to be "rich in faith."² On the other hand the introduction to chapter two, ". . . do not have the faith of our Lord . . . along with regard for what a man has" actually seems to demand the definition which the writer forges out in the last half of that chapter. James is willing to use the term in another way, accommodating himself to what must have been current nomenclature in his day, but only in order to point out how inadequate this usage is.

Faith in Matthew's Gospel

For Matthew, faith never signifies a mere mental assent to a doctrine, nor is the term used to designate a body of religious tenets which are to be approved. One does not become a believer by approving certain things. On a similar note, it is not necessary for one to be an Israelite in order to have faith.³ Matthew records Jesus' astonished commendation of the centurion, a Gentile surely; "I have not found such faith in Israel."⁴ The Canaanite woman receives the Matthean commendation, "Woman, great

¹James 1:6, 5:15.

²James 2:5.

³The truth of this statement becomes the more interesting in light of the additional fact that Matthew makes faith one of the "weightier matters" (βαρύτερα) of the law in 23:23.

⁴Matthew 8:10. This is a Q source pericope: cf. Luke 7:9.

is your faith,"¹ omitted in Mark's account.

For both of these Gentiles faith was a strong dependence² rather than a mental agreement with the thoughts and words of Jesus, for at least in the latter case, it is apparent that there is some reluctance on Jesus' part to grant the woman's desire. The woman depends on him--against his own inclination³--and the strength of this dependency wins the granting of a request. The Marcan version of the story reports Jesus' words simply as, "For this saying you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." Matthew's modification of Mark's pericope, adding the concept of dependency, heightens the mood of active anticipation on the part of the woman. (Mark's version allows for the interpretation either that the woman was witty enough in her response to merit Jesus' approval as an exceptional case, or that she was sufficiently orthodox in her thought and speech to win Jesus' favor.) A further result of the Matthean changes is that the Lordship of Jesus--and his worthiness as a person to

¹Matthew 15:28, cf. Mark 7:24ff. Cf. C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels, (2nd ed. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1968), II, pp. 228f., in which Montefiore (along with Streeter) speculates a written M source which, in this instance among a rare few, is more original--or at least more accurate--than Mark.

²"Assurance, confidence, trust." W. C. Allen, ICC: Matthew (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912), p. 168.

³Verses 23-25 are not in Mark. They serve the purpose of heightening the effect. "Not at once, and only because of the woman's earnest importunity, did Christ condescend to her" (Ibid. p. 169. Cf. also McNeile, op. cit., p. 230).

be trusted--are amplified.¹

Matthew has included among his miracle stories the accounts of the recovery of sight for four blind men. He has listed two men for the Jericho happening² in contrast to one blind man in Mark's and Luke's accounts, but unlike either Mark or Luke he has eliminated any reference to faith in this pericope. Both of the other synoptists report the words ". . . your faith has made you well," while Matthew describes healing action as if it had been unaccompanied by words.³ On the other hand, Matthew's other account of the healing of the blind, an account unique to Matthew,⁴ emphasizes faith as the necessary element in the recovery of sight. Again there are two blind men. Jesus asked them if they believed in his ability to perform the miracle; and upon their affirmative answer he touched their eyes and spoke the words, "Accord-

¹Cf. McNeile, Matthew, p. 231.

²Matthew 20:29ff. Cf. Mark 10:46ff., and Luke 18:35ff.

³This, in contrast to McNeile's inference (Matthew, p. 232) that the statement about faith was included uniquely by Matt. in 15:28. Merely to echo "the language used in other accounts of cures."

⁴Matthew 9:27ff. Albright and Mann, The Anchor Bible: Matthew (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 112, indicate that this account parallels Mk. 10:46-52. However, a careful examination of the parallels produces few parallels between Matthew 9:27-31, and Mark 10:46-52. Those that exist are (1) the fact that both narratives deal with blind men; (2) the cry of the blind, "Have mercy . . . Son of David;" (3) a question by Jesus and a response by the blind (though the questions and responses are completely dissimilar). By contrast, the narrative in Matthew 20:29-34, bears a close similarity to the Marcan passage in question.

ing to your faith be it done to you."¹ The faith is not the cause of the healing, but its norm.²

The status of faith in relation to miracles is discussed by Albright and Mann:

If in the past miracles have been stressed in order to lead men to faith in God, this concern is not paramount in the Gospels. There it is man's faith which causes God to respond with his saving act (cf. Matt. xv 28; Mark ix 24; Luke v 20; etc.), because such trust is witness to a humility which accepts God's sovereign rule. Lack of faith can put obstacles in the way of open declaration of that rule (cf. Matt. xvii 19-20).³

One other passage is of interest in determining Matthew's understanding of faith, i.e. Matthew 23:23. In 5:19, Jesus spoke negatively of relaxing "the least of the commandments," and here, by way of contrast, "the weightier matters of the law" are the subject.

McNeile summarizes in saying that the heavy precepts of the law--for Jesus, at least--are "moral and social

¹This statement calls to mind Matthew 13:58 (Cf. Mark 6:5f.) on the absence of deeds of power where there is no belief in the agent of those deeds. Cf. Hill, op. cit., p. 242.

²Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1932), p. 367.

³Albright and Mann, op. cit., p. cxxx. In each of three passages utilizing the concept "faith" which Matthew has derived from Mark the same dynamic may be said to be operative. In the pericope dealing with the paralytic (Mt. 9:2/Mk. 2:5/Lk. 5:20) the statement is "when he saw their faith. . .," that is, the faith of the men who brought the paralytic, likely including that of the paralytic himself. In the company of others who believed for him, the authority of Jesus was called forth in an act of forgiveness and healing--an expression in Matthew (as well as in Mark and Luke) of Heilsgechichte. Cf. also the other Matthean faith-passages (Mt. 9:22/Mk. 5:34/Lk. 8:48 and Mt. 21:21/Mk. 11:22) for the action of God in response to faith in His sovereignty.

requirements," thus they are enumerated as justice, mercy, and τὴν πίστιν.¹ As to the significance of τὴν πίστιν in this context, it seems to become a quality which may characterize a person in the same way that justice and mercy are characteristic of a righteous person. Kittel describes its use here in terms of "faithfulness,"² and Albright and Mann translate it as "honesty."³

The use of πίστις with this meaning is not found elsewhere in Matthew. In no other passage does the evangelist describe a characteristic of being by using this word. Yet this occurrence of πίστις may not be so far from his usual language as one might suspect: each of the passages which employs this word also may be seen to employ the concept of truth in some measure. This is not to be understood in the sense that now the truth becomes part of the person who believes, but that to the degree that he believes (or "has" faith), so to that degree he has submitted to truth.⁴

This "submission to truth" may be inserted into passages already examined, for example. To the two blind

¹McNeile, Matthew, p. 335. Cf. his statement that the Jews sometimes distinguished between the "heavy" and the "light" in their enumeration of the 613 commandments (Ibid. p. 59).

²Kittel, "πιστεύω, κτλ." TDNT, p. 204. Cf. McNeile, who uses the descriptive term "'fidelity' . . . , a social virtue like the others." (p. 335).

³Albright and Mann, op. cit., pp. 277, 280.

⁴The kinship between the words true and trust may be cited here as an illustrative example of the logical connection. Cf. The New Century Dictionary of the English Language, ed. H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster, Revision editor Charles H. Fitch (New York and London: D. Appleton Century Company, 1948), p. 2058.

men: "According to (the degree of) your submission to what is true may it be done for you." To the Canaanite woman: "Woman, great is your submission to what is true." To the centurion: "I have not found such submission to what is true in Israel."

Matthew had redacted one of the Marcan occurrences of πίστις to make his emphasis somewhat stronger.¹ Mark 11:22, 23, says, "Have faith in God . . . whoever says to this mountain 'be removed and be cast into the sea' and does not doubt in his heart but believes . . . it will be done for him." Matthew's parallel of this passage begins "if you have faith and do not doubt . . . ," (or, "If you have submission to what is true and if you do not still think it is impossible"² . . .). Unlike Mark, Matthew never connects the concepts "faith" and "God" in such a way as to say directly that God is the object of faith. This for him would be redundant.³ To "have faith" itself signifies that one is committing himself to that which is true, that is, to God.⁴ Therefore, Matthew is unable to use the word πίστις to signify an orthodox body of doctrine or a creed. He is equally unwilling to use the noun "faith" in describing a trust in things which are

¹Matthew 21:21f.

²Friedrich Buchsel, "κρίνω, κτλ." TDNT, III, 946.

³Cf. Allen, Matthew, pp. 65, 189, 224.

⁴Cf. Bultmann, "πιστεύω κτλ," TDNT, VI, 206, 208f., 216, where Bultmann considers the objects of faith, often assumed within the words "faith" or "believe" themselves.

not true,¹ though he does use the verb πιστεύω in such a way. Twice in the apocalyptic discourse Matthew includes warnings against belief when someone says, "Lo, here is the Christ, or . . . he is in the desert, or in the secret rooms." Whether by conscious design or by personal habit of usage, Matthew has made a clear-cut distinction between his use of πίστις and of πιστεύω.

Otherwise in Matthew the verbal form of the group of words appears in conjunction with believing John the Baptist (21:25, 32, four times); believing in the power and good will of God (8:13, 21:22), or of Jesus (9:28); or of believing in Jesus Himself (18:6, 27:42).

This variety of types of usage bespeaks a generalized concept of the verb πιστεύω which seems to be absent in the Matthean use of the noun πίστις.²

Matthew uses the negative noun-form ἀπιστία once (13:58) compared with three occurrences of the word in Mark (Matthew's use of the word is drawn from Mark 6:6). John and Luke-Acts have no instance of use of this word. The adjective ἀπιστός appears once: "O faithless and perverse generation. . . .," where both Matthew and Luke

¹Cf. Luke 16:11, "faithful in the unrighteous mammon" seems to be outside Matthew's usage, and thus he omits this portion of the Q pericope which concerns serving God and mammon.

²The adjective πιστός in Matthew's Gospel appears only in three verses, all in the fifth discourse (24:45; 25:21, 23) and in each case the word is used to describe the actions or character of a servant who is faithful to the responsibility which is his. In each case he was aware of his responsibility.

parallel Mark.¹ In neither of these words can any distinct Matthean usage of the concept of faith be discerned.

The words ὀλιγόπιστος and ὀλιγοπιστία are words which Matthew reserves to describe the disciples. (The only other New Testament use of either word is in Luke 12:28, parallel to Matthew 6:30: ". . . how much more will he clothe you, O men of little faith?" Luke also specifies that this is a word to the disciples.). Matthew employs ὀλιγόπιστος in four separate passages, and ὀλιγοπιστία once. In each occurrence the "littleness" of the faith simply is an indication that the trust which the disciples demonstrate is not a complete trust. Apparently the disciples sincerely tried to exorcise a demon, and sincerely expected to succeed. But Matthew reports that they were unsuccessful because of their ὀλιγοπιστία (17:20): not that they thought it would not happen (verse 19 indicates otherwise), but that the trust they had was not unwavering. A similar analysis may be made of the other "little faith" passages: Peter had just walked on the water (14:28-31)--quite an act of faith--yet he was asked, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" The fact that he had any moment of hesitation in his complete trust had made him become ὀλιγόπιστος.²

¹In this pericope both Matthew and Luke add ". . . and perverse . . .," which Mark, in its present form, does not have. This pericope is not usually attributed to Q, though it may be one of the places in which Mark and Q overlap.

²Cf. ὀλιγόπιστος in Matthew 8:26, 6:30, and the most puzzling of the passages in question, 16:8. In each of these pericopes, as well as in those described above, anxiety is a factor.

To summarize, Matthew's use of πίστις and its related forms corresponds well with that of the Epistle of James 1:6-8.¹ Faith allows for no wavering: it must be complete trust in God and submission to Him, "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting." James has used faith also in the sense of "a body of belief," in James 2:1, 14, 17-20, 24, 26. However, his aim is to show how lacking such a "faith" is--how much it differs from his own careful delineation of faith in 1:6, 2:18, and 2:22. Matthew has carefully set the outside bounds for his concept of faith by his contrasting use of the term ὀλιγόπιστος.

¹Both James and Matthew, it must be remembered, use the term πιστεύω to signify the idea of placing credence in a message or in facts (cf. Matthew 21:25, 32 and James 2:19).

CHAPTER SEVEN

WISDOM IN JAMES AND MATTHEW

WISDOM IN JAMES AND MATTHEW

The Epistle of James has no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit.¹ However, it has been suggested that James speaks of "wisdom" as if that word were some sort of code-word for the Holy Spirit.²

Two passages in James speak of Wisdom. The fuller one, 3:13-18, speaks of the result of wisdom in the life of one who receives it. Wisdom is not an attainment, after which one can strive, and which one may earn. Rather it is clearly set forth in the short passage as something bestowed, given freely and in generosity³--a gift of grace, so to speak--as God's response to a believing request for it.

An examination of both contexts of the use of the term wisdom (σοφία) reveals that it is not to be taken in the

¹James 4:5 ("Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us'? - R.S.V.) is obscure and has been translated in various ways. N.E.B. appears to take it as a "spirit of life," as does William Barclay, The New Testament: A New Translation. Vol. II, The Letters and the Revelation (London: Collins, 1969). J. B. Phillips, on the other hand, interprets thus: "Or do you imagine that this spirit of passionate jealousy is the Spirit He has caused to live in us?" Letters to Young Churches (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1947).

²Cf. J. A. Kirk, "The Meaning of Wisdom in James: Examination of a Hypothesis," New Testament Studies, 16 (1969), p. 24ff.

³Cf. Ropes, James, pp. 139-140. See also H. Riesenfeld, "ΑΠΑΘΕ, Zu Jak. 1,5" Coniectanea Neotestamentica 9 (1944), pp. 33-41; M. Dibelius, Der Brief des Jakobus (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1964), p. 107.

usual Stoic sense of "Science," which is often reflected in Paul's epistles.¹

A brief look at Wisdom thought in Judaism is in order, before proceeding further. Wisdom is personified, almost hypostatized, in the book of Proverbs--especially 1:20-9:11--and this gives rise to a great deal of "Wisdom speculation," especially in a later Hellenistic Judaism.² This mythology included the concept of an active wisdom figure prior to creation, involved in creation, and which was "sent to men but found no home there and returned to God in heaven, whence it again and again descends to the wise."³

While much New Testament thought and teaching developed along the lines of identification of Christ with this wisdom-figure, as, e.g., Suggs had indicated was the case with Matthew,⁴ and this Christ-Wisdom figure was also identified with the Torah by Matthew.⁵ This devel-

¹Cf. also Ropes, loc. cit.

²Cf. Werner Georg Kümmel, The Theology of the New Testament According to Its Major Witnesses Jesus - Paul - John (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 121.

³Ibid. Cf. also Georg Fohrer, "Sophia," in Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom, selected, with a prolegomenon, by James L. Crenshaw (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976), p. 69. (= Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: VII, 482).

⁴M. Jack Suggs, Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 63-71, 99-108.

⁵Ibid., pp. 106-108. Cf. also R. G. Hamerton-Kelley, Pre-existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man: A Study of the Idea of Pre-existence in the New Testament (Cambridge: The University Press, 1973), p. 83.

opment seems, by contrast, to be absent from James. Much of the Old Testament thought on wisdom avoided the mythological speculation of Hellenistic Judaism, and emphasized (in common with much of the ancient oriental world) the practical aspects of human sagacity and prudence, ethical conduct and piety,¹ and it is this practical-prudential-devotional aspect of wisdom which we find in our epistle. This must be seen largely as a contrast to Matthew.

In the Epistle of James, "Wisdom" is accompanied by meekness, and expresses itself by the works of a good life. (A sort of wisdom is recognized by the author which has other characteristics, notably the absence of humility; but this is another kind altogether.)

James draws a connection between wisdom and another of his important themes, works. If a man is wise, he must show his works from his good life. Wisdom is to be expressed outwardly, not merely held within: and its natural expression is a good life, and works which, James insists, are always the result of the life of faith.

Selfish ambition (ἐριθεία) and bitter jealousy are the antithesis of the wisdom which includes these unwholesome characteristics, and he is careful to differentiate the wisdom "of the earth" (ἐπίγειος) from that which comes down from above (ἀνωθεν κατερχομένη). Where there is jealousy and self-seeking ambition, there can exist the lower wisdom, which is characterised as unspiritual

¹G. Fohrer, "σοφία, κτλ." Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. G. Friedrich, VII, pp. 477-487.

(ψυχικῇ) and demonic. But on the other hand, these characteristics cannot exist where the wisdom "from above" abides. Each rules out the other.

On the positive side, the wisdom from above has certain definite marks: it is "first of all pure" (ἀγνή¹). In the description which follows, in verse 17, wisdom is nearly personified.² It is peaceable, gracious (ἐπιεικής),³ ready to obey, full of mercy and of good fruits; it is unwavering (ἀδιδάκρυτος) and has no hypocrisy. These are the characteristics of true wisdom, and "are selected in pointed opposition to the self-assertive, quarrelsome spirit characteristic of the other sort."⁴

At this point an examination of this description in brief comparison with Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) is in order. It has been noted that there are certain similarities between the two passages. The question to be considered is whether these similarities constitute a definite parallel, so that it can be said either that both writers used a similar tradition or that they both meant to describe a similar outcome of divine influence in the life of the Christian. The examination will be conducted first of all along two lines, a linguistic and what may be termed a "conceptual"

¹Cf. F. Hauck, "ἀγνός," κτλ. TDNT I. 122.

²Herbert Preisker, "ἐπιεικής," TDNT, II, 590.

³Επιεικής appears to have the meaning, not so much gentle, as "exhibiting a moderate nature befitting a high position." Ibid.

⁴Ropes, James, p. 250.

comparison.

The Linguistic Comparison Between James 3:13-18 and Galatians 5:19-23.

Two of the unwholesome attributes which accompany the lower wisdom in James (3:14, 16) are ζήλος and ἐριθεία jealousy and selfish ambition. These two, in fact, are the only two which appear to stem directly from such "wisdom," for the passage may be set forth in this way: There is a wisdom which allows room for bitter jealousy and selfish ambition (v. 14).

"This wisdom is not the kind from above,

but is earthly, unspiritual, demon-like.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist

they have as their result

disorder and worthless acts" (vv. 15, 16).

The lower wisdom allows place for jealousy and selfishness; and these two characteristics produce unfortunate, negative, results.

Paul's description of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21 consists of a long list of sixteen elements. It may be mentioned in passing that most of them might in summary be called "disorder and worthless acts," but it is worth noting that two of them are ζήλος and ἐριθεία. Paul enumerates them in the midst of his list, with no amplification.

On the other hand, in James' description of the wisdom which comes down from above he says,

[if a man is wise] let him show . . . his good works in the meekness (πραύτητι) of wisdom (v. 13) . . . the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable (εἰρηνική) . . . full of mercy and of good fruits (καρπῶν ἀγαθῶν) (v. 17).

Paul, likewise, in speaking of the effect of the Holy Spirit, and a good life, says:

"The fruit (καρπός) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace (εἰρήνη), . . . goodness (ἀγαθωσύνη), faith, meekness (πραύτης)" (Gal. 5:22, 23).

The emphasis of Paul here in this whole passage is the stark contrast between the natural man and the spiritual man; or the man "in the flesh" and the man "in the Spirit." So, too, in the James passage: though neither flesh nor spirit is mentioned, the aim is to distinguish a spiritual addition to the Christian's life from the "natural" element corresponding to it. The language which is used by both writers may have come from a common stock; though there are not so many similarities as to suggest any kind of literary relationship. "Fruit," "peace," "meekness," "goodness," on the positive side; "jealousy" and "selfish ambition" on the negative side, give the general appearance that the same contrast is being described in slightly different ways in the two epistles.

The Conceptual Comparison Between the Two Passages

In Both James 3:13-18 and Galatians 5:19-23 there is a sharp contrast drawn between the good and the bad. This, of course, is not at all unusual in religious writings. However, both the elements which are to be desired are brought by an element which is infused from an external

source. Neither the better wisdom, in James, nor the Spirit, in Galatians, is natural to a man.

The purpose of the infusion in both passages is the high, humane, ethical behavior which is to be exhibited in a good life. But in both cases the effect appears to be automatic: with the addition of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit does not need to be the end of a long, fierce, valiant struggle. Rather, there is the simple encouragement, "if by the Spirit we live, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). And in James, though the third person imperative replaces Paul's hortatory subjunctive construction, the statement is equally straightforward: "who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in wisdom's meekness" (3:13).

In James, as in Galatians, the reader is left in no doubt that the added element is a gift from God. James does not tell in this passage just how the Wisdom from above is granted; but he said in 1:5f. that it comes by (1) recognition of a need; (2) prayer; (3) faith.

It may be inferred from Galatians 5:24 that the Spirit is granted to a man who crucifies "the flesh, with its passions and desires." Yet it is part of the freedom from bondage to the flesh, which is the subject of this chapter. Even for the Christian the possibility remains of being entangled in things of the flesh; thus the encouragement not to submit again "to a yoke of slavery" (5:1). So in both cases the human will plays a part, up

to a point; and then the element which has been added works in its own way to produce fruit.

The ultimate result in both cases is a peaceable life, order, and harmony with other people. It is worth noting that the natural evil state is in both passages described first; then the good, supernatural.

The results of the working of both elements are referred to as "fruit." This has already been mentioned; but it will call to mind various other New Testament passages, which are mentioned below.¹

On the basis of these parallels it appears that the wisdom which James describes is not exactly equivalent to the Holy Spirit as understood by Paul, but rather wisdom is the practical equivalent of the fruit of the Spirit. Just as the fruit of the Spirit is brought by the Spirit, so too is wisdom.²

Paul speaks of the nine virtues which characterize a good Christian life under a heading which is treated remarkably in the singular. The same can be said of James' use of a similar group of eight characteristics.

Paul naturally has a twofold use of wisdom as well as James. He speaks of the wisdom of this age, or this world (I Cor. 1:18-31): and of "all spiritual wisdom" (Colossians 1:9, 10). In terms which seem reminiscent of the personification of wisdom found in the eighth chapter of

¹Infra., p. 181.

²James does not explicitly mention the agency, but Paul's mention too is implicit rather than explicit.

Proverbs, Paul goes so far as to call Christ Himself, "the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1:24). Paul, too, links the higher wisdom with the Spirit of God--not in any sort of identification, but in saying that the Spirit brings heavenly wisdom.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age . . . a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him," God has revealed to us through the Spirit. . . . Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. . . . We have the mind of Christ.¹

For Paul, then, true spiritual wisdom is brought by the Spirit; and it is associated intimately with Christ,² variously with His person, His "mind," His word, or His will.

In James, by way of contrast, there is no link between wisdom and Christ, either expressed or implied. Rather, wisdom here is a power which is imparted as a direct answer of prayer to God. It is possible to infer that the active agent in its bestowal is the Holy Spirit, although that is an interpretation which is not demanded by the

¹I Cor. 2:6-10, 12-13, 16.

²This is true in at least the following passages in Paul: I Cor. 1:24; 2:15-16; Col. 1:9, 2:3, 3:16.

text.¹

Wisdom in Matthew Compared with James

The terms *σόφος*, *σοφία* occur rarely in Matthew, but in passages which are quite important to understanding the message.² Normally the wisdom of Jesus is the subject. This is indicated, for example, in the Marcan thought which Matthew reproduced in 13:54:

where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son?³

¹Once again the problem of what James does not say arises. However, what is certain is that James wrote from a background of Old Testament and Intertestamental wisdom literature, which came close to an identification of wisdom with the Spirit of God (Cf. J. A. Kirk, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-35). Such passages as Proverbs 8:22-31, Wisdom 7:22, 8:5, and particularly Ecclesiasticus 24:3, 4, in comparison with Genesis 1:2 and other passages which speak of creation show that a very close connection had been made between the action of the Spirit and Wisdom. Cf. B. R. Halson, "The Epistle of James: 'Christian Wisdom?'" *Texte und Untersuchungen, Studia Evangelica*, Vol. 4, part 1, pp. 308-314. Also see W. Bieder, "Christliche Existenz nach dem zeugnis des Jakobusbriefes" *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 5 (1949), pp. 111-113. Bieder himself makes the identification of James' "wisdom" with the Spirit.

²Cf. the recent investigations into Q and Wisdom passages in Matthew, e.g. M. Jack Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology and Law in Matthew's Gospel*, *passim*; R. G. Hamerton-Kelly, *Pre-existence, Wisdom, and the Son of Man*, pp. 67-83; James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), especially pp. 71-157.

³The countrymen of Jesus thought it remarkable that Jesus could be given wisdom in a special measure. Compare this attitude with James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask of God who gives to all men liberally . . . it shall be given him." The Galileans could not understand what James' readers were fully expected to grasp. After the Pentecost-event the Holy Spirit was given to all believers, rather than to selected individuals, as before. And, according to this view, this wisdom is brought by the Holy Spirit.

Or again, in 12:42, in a Q passage Matthew writes:

the queen of the South will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

The importance of such a passage as the latter is naturally not to be underestimated. Recalling the Old Testament references to Solomon, it is necessary to understand this as a claim to greatness higher than that of the "wisest man" in Israel's past--whether the reference is to himself, or to the Kingdom.¹

Two other, less important, references to "the wise" in Matthew are in the passage from Q (11:25) which is Jesus' prayer,

I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes,

and in the denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees,

I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will scourge . . . and persecute (23:34).

The key Matthean passage on wisdom, however, is at the end of Jesus' statement on John the Baptist, found in 11:7-19.² After a firm, unequivocal confirmation of the mission of John, he says,

But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places

¹Cf. Kümmel, New Testament Introduction, p. 66.

²Cf. James M. Robinson, "LOGOI SOPHON: On the Gattung of Q" in James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 112f. Cf. also Suggs, op. cit., pp. 56ff.

and calling to their playmates. "We piped to you, and you did not dance: we wailed, and you did not mourn." For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon;" the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.

Before comment is made on this passage it will be helpful to look at the Lucan parallel, Lk. 7:35. The parallel is quite close, with variations only in minor points of style, until the last phrase. Luke says, "Wisdom is justified by all her children." His meaning clearly refers to verses 29 and 30, where he alone says, parenthetically:

when they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

Those (the people and tax collectors) who discern the divine sending of John and Jesus are the children of wisdom.¹ Her children are such as "the people," tax collectors, and sinners,² as opposed to the Pharisees and lawyers, who had no regard for the divine commission which stood unalterably behind the messenger and the Lord.

But Matthew's text does not include references to wisdom's children; rather he speaks of wisdom's deeds. Strecker says, "ἐργων wird mattäisches Interpretament sein,"³ and it

¹W. F. Arndt, St. Luke (St. Louis: Concordia Press, 1956), p. 216.

²E. Klostermann, Das Mattäusevangelium (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1927), p. 100.

³G. Strecker, Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962), p. 102. W. Manson, The

is virtually certain that he is correct in this; but he hardly has hit upon the correct reason. He says that Matthew's change was introduced because it eases the transition to the following paragraph, the upbraiding of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. In fact, either of the two words would suit equally well, though with different emphasis. If τέκνων were used, as in Luke, the message would carry a strong contrast between those who had believed and the unbelieving cities. But the message as it stands carries the meaning that Jesus as well as John has a self-authenticating message:¹

it may be readily discerned where true wisdom is--and thus where truth itself is--because such wisdom is justified by the works which result from it.

It is precisely the same meaning as the saying about good fruit from good trees.² Since in this specific context

Gospel of Luke: The Moffatt N.T. Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), pp. 82, 83; and G. M. Creed, mention the variation between Matt. and Luke, and indicate that it has not been satisfactorily explained. Creed cites Wellhausen and Harnack saying it "is perhaps a very early corruption or mistake." J. M. Creed, The Gospel According to St. Luke (London: Macmillan, 1957). Julius Schniewind, Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), p. 147, says that possibly the same Aramaic word stands behind the two words, "works" and "children," but if the variant was introduced for theological reasons it was Matthew who made the change. Klostermann, Das Matthäusevangelium (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1927), p. 100, suggests a possible very ancient variant of "abadeh='ihre Werke' und abdeh='ihre Knechte,'" presumably in an Aramaic Q.

¹Cf. Suggs, op. cit., p. 57.

²Cf. Matthew 7:16-20 and James 3:11-12. This, of course, is part of the significance of James' introduction to the wisdom passage in 3:13. "Who is wise . . . ? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." This saying immediately follows James' use of the fruit and tree analogy.

it refers to Jesus and the Baptist, it fits precisely with the following paragraph, as Strecker observes.

The reason for Matthew's change of wisdom's children to wisdom's works is that for Matthew the wise person is always the one who puts into action what he knows to be right. In one of the most appealing of Jesus' pictures, Matthew specifically calls one man wise and the other foolish. The wise man (φρόνιμος) is the one who hears and does the words of Jesus; like a man who builds his house on the rock. The foolish man (μώρος) is the one who hears and does not act. He is compared to a man stupidly building a house on sand; his work will not remain. The provident person is he who fulfils the requirements of God.

Jesus in all his actions, demonstrated that he had right on his side.¹ His actions are not only negatively portrayed as without blame (as stone is blameless, merely by doing nothing); he also is active in doing works which are wholesome and right.² Matthew signified this by the inclusion of the saying, "Wisdom is justified by her deeds." The same message is given in James 3:13, with the general application to all men, without exclusive reference to Jesus.

In a paragraph which has other parallels to the first wisdom-passage in James, Matthew says, "Ask, and it will

¹Cf. John 10:25-38; 14:10-11; which compare favorably with Matthew 11:2-6, 19, and which contrast with Matthew 23:3-5.

²Cf. J. A. Kleist, "'Ergon' in the Gospels," CBQ 6, 1944).

be given you."

Matthew 7:7, 8

Αἰτεῖτε, καὶ δοθήσεται
 ὑμῖν . . . πᾶς γὰρ ὁ
 αἰτῶν λαμβάνει

James 1:5

αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος
 θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ
 ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ δοθήσεται
 αὐτῷ

Both passages place the verb ask in the imperative, and both record the simple promise, "it will be given," as well as a general teaching about the generosity of God. But the important point for the present consideration of wisdom-gifts-Holy Spirit is what Matthew does not say a few verses later. In a verse which has an almost exact parallel in Luke, Matthew says:

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

The single variation between Matthew and Luke is the oft-noted inclusion by Luke of "the Holy Spirit" in place of Matthew's use of the term "good things." It has generally been suggested that Luke made the modification from the content of their common source, on the grounds that the natural move is from the general to the specific.¹

¹Perhaps too much has been made of the Holy Spirit's being a "favorite Lukan term" (cf. E. E. Ellis, The Gospel of Luke: New Century Bible. London: Nelson, 1966, p. 243). Of the thirty-six occurrences of the word πνεῦμα in the Gospel, fully nineteen of them have no reference to the Holy Spirit, but speak of the human spirit, evil spirits, and others. Of the seventeen references to the Holy Spirit (or Spirit of God, etc.) thirteen occur in the first 3 chapters of the Gospel, and two of the other four have parallels in Matthew. Thus there are only two independent occurrences of the Holy Spirit in twenty and one-half chapters of Luke's Gospel.

However, in this case, could it not be that Matthew made the change? Matthew along with Mark, seems to avoid reference to possession of the Holy Spirit by anyone other than Jesus. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He received the Spirit at his baptism, and by the Spirit He was led into the wilderness to be tempted. The only instance of the Holy Spirit in anyone other than Jesus, in Matthew, is 10:20, where Jesus says that "when the disciples shall be delivered up in persecution they must not be anxious in preparing or rehearsing words to say: it will be given to them . . . in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

This pericope is included in all three Gospels, but in Mark and Luke it is connected with the eschatological discourse in Jerusalem.¹ Luke, however, has a doublet to this pericope, in 12:11, 12, following the saying on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.²

Matthew alone connects the promise with a special gift of Jesus. The Matthean context in which the pericope is found is Jesus' instruction and preparation of the twelve disciples before their missionary tour.³ He had called to

¹Mark 13:11, and Luke 21:14, 15, where Luke has a slightly different form, omitting reference specifically to the Holy Spirit and referring to wisdom instead: "for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict."

²In this place Luke includes the reference to the Holy Spirit: He "will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

³While Mark and Luke present the sufferings and per-

himself his disciples, and "gave them authority (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν) over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity" (10:1).

The Holy Spirit in Matthew is carefully kept in the power, or more specifically under the authority, of Jesus. At the end of the Gospel, after the resurrection, Jesus delegates this authority to the disciples through His continuing presence: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples . . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . and behold: it is I who will be with you always."

The disciples are to take authority because of the presence of Jesus with them; and this authority includes baptizing in the name of the Holy Spirit. The single previous hint that the disciples had any gift of the Holy Spirit was that reference (10:20) which followed a specific gift of authority, given for a specific purpose.¹

secution of the disciples as a part of the post-Easter life of the Church leading to the eschaton, Matthew is not concerned with any eschatological significance in this case. Therefore, he places it in a setting of missionary activity, and the Holy Spirit in the disciples appears as a result of the authority which Jesus gave. Cf. W. G. Kümmel, Promise and Fulfilment, trans. D. M. Barton (London: SCM Press, 1961), pp. 98f.

¹I believe that the writer of the Gospel has been very careful not to carry back the general dispensation of the Holy Spirit anachronistically to a time before Pentecost. The same may be said for Luke for the most part, though not exclusively so. This is one element of the "historicity" question which requires more investigation. Regarding the theology of the Holy Spirit in the first three chapters of Luke, these references appear to be short-term manifestations which have the effect of declaring the miraculous and divine nature of the events surrounding the birth of

The pericope on asking which Matthew includes in 7:7-11 (=Luke 11:9-13) follows the saying on not throwing pearls before swine, and precedes the golden rule and the saying about the narrow gate. Of these, only the golden rule is an ethical demand; but they all may be called rules for successful Christian living. None is impossible to keep, contrary to a common characterization of the Sermon on the Mount as a whole.

The parallel which we saw between this passage and James 1:5 thus reveals some conclusions. Matthew seems to show a hesitation to speak of the Holy Spirit as proceeding directly from the Father to the believer, possibly because of a cautious refusal to place such an anachronism into the pre-pentecostal setting of the Gospel. Although he follows his source quite closely here, it seems probable that his correction of the source is based either on a more reliable source or upon his own judgment that the Holy Spirit did not belong in that saying. James' use of a definite promise which bears marks akin to that in Matthew (αἰτέω . . . καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ, and the general confidence of the promise) may be based on knowledge of the tradition about Jesus, or on knowledge of some of the words of Jesus themselves.¹ He, of course, did not claim to reproduce

Jesus and of John the Baptist. They are legitimate applications to the general principle that before Pentecost only certain select persons are given the Holy Spirit. Cf. Strack-Billerbeck, II, 130-135; III, 312; IV, 444, inter alia, for Rabbinic teaching on the Holy Spirit, which confirms this. Cf. also Erik Sjöberg, "πνεῦμα, πνευματικός," TDNT, VI, 382-389.

¹If, contrary to my supposition, the words of Q as re-

sayings of Jesus; but the tone of this saying, and of others, may give some echo of the Lord's teaching.¹

Wisdom in the Epistle of James is not sought for its own sake, but as a gift of the Spirit it provides a basis for a good life. It is granted as God's response to believing prayer, in the same way as Matthew declares "good things" are given. What Matthew signifies by good things includes wisdom among other gifts.

corded in Lk. 11:13 are authentic words of Jesus (comparable, then to John 14:17, etc.) it becomes remarkable that both Matthew and James should use periphrasis in referring to the Spirit. I consider this less likely, however, than this alternative: the saying of Jesus had reference to gifts or help brought by the Holy Spirit, and Matthew used the most general term, Luke (and Q) made a general post-pentecost application, and James made a specific application to the problem with which he was concerned.

¹Cf. Kittel, "Geschichtliches Ort . . . ," pp. 84ff. Massey Shepherd Jr. suggests, rightly, I think, that "it would be absurd to maintain that the author of the Epistle had a written copy of the Gospel of Matthew in front of him" when he wrote. But I believe that he is wrong in attributing the favorable comparisons between the documents to the idea that James had heard the Gospel of Matthew read in his church (op. cit., p. 107). This might account for the isolated phrases which occur with remarkable likeness in both books, and for the general similarities in viewpoint; but only after several readings. If that were the case, his congregation almost certainly possessed a copy of Matthew. And if the Gospel were available locally, why would this auditor not seek out the document for somewhat closer comparison and correction?

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CONCEPT WORD IN MATTHEW AND JAMES

THE CONCEPT WORD IN MATTHEW AND JAMES

Both the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle of James exhibit a variety in their use of the concept "word." Matthew uses the term ῥῆμα five times, and λόγος some thirty-three times: more than six times as frequently. Over half of the occurrences of λόγος in Matthew are uniquely his, i.e., not able to be directly attributed to Mark or Q in parallel passages. It is these--some nineteen of the total of approximately thirty-three (depending upon textual variants)--that we shall primarily consider.

Matthew frequently carries the strong coloration of the Hebrew $\aleph \beth \daleth$ in his use of λόγος.¹ Particularly the self-activating force of a word itself appears in chapters eight, twelve, and twenty-four. In 8:16 the simple statement of exorcism is, "He cast out demons with a word (λόγῳ)." In 12:36, 37, the statement about judgment is, "every idle word (ῥῆμα ἄργον) which men shall speak they will repay a word (or "give account": ἀποδώσουσιν . . . λόγον) concerning it in the day of judgment: for by your words (ἐκ τῶν λόγων) you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned." Similarly, later in the Gospel, in

¹Cf. Kittel, "λέγω κτλ." TDNT, IV, pp. 93, 105, *passim*. Cf. also Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 182f., for the concept of act; deed; affair; expressed through the use of $\aleph \beth \daleth$.

a Marcan passage included by Matthew, Jesus says, "Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away" (24:35). In these passages λόγος is used with the idea of an inherent reality or power in the word itself.¹

On other occasions the λόγος in Matthew is seen as the "ethical command."² At the end of no fewer than three of Matthew's five discourse sections--notably those which contain a major thrust of ethical teaching--Matthew says, "when Jesus had finished these words . . ."³ It is almost as if a command equals a "word" in this specialized usage.

The case would admittedly be weak if these three examples were the only evidence in Matthew. But in 15:6 Jesus says, "for the sake of your tradition you make void the word (= command?) of God."⁴ The context of the question includes

¹Cf. the comments on the "abiding" word in Schlatter, Matthaus, p. 713.

²Cf. Plummer, Matthew, pp. 117f. Cf. in this regard Strecker's comment in connection with Matthew 7:24ff., that the teaching of Jesus is a call for decision (Weg der Gerechtigkeit, pp. 127f.).

³Matthew 7:28, 19:1, 26:1. Contrast these with 11:1, "when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples . . ." and 13:53, "when Jesus had finished these parables . . ." In neither of these latter cases is the major theme of the discourse the ethical philosophy or activity of the hearers. It appears then to be a significant choice of the word on Matthew's part, though the RSV translates τοὺς λόγους as "sayings." It must be noted as well that the term logoi is considered by some to designate a collection of Jesus' sayings (cf. James M. Robinson "LOGOI SOPHON: on the Gattung of Q," in James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 87). This may be partly true, but I contend that Matthew's tendency is to wish to emphasize ethical implications as a connotation of this term.

⁴Cf. McNeile, Matthew, p. 224, word "refers to the divinely inspired Pentateuch, and does not differ in meaning from νόμον."

the fifth commandment of the Decalogue (verse 4) and the parallel question, "why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" (verse 3). Speaking of celibacy, Jesus said, "Not all men can receive this precept (λόγος)" (19:11).¹ Later in the same chapter a passage of Marcan origin has a similar use of λόγος after Jesus' command that the rich young man give all to the poor: the comment is that when he heard this word (again we may almost substitute the word command: Albright and Mann use the term "injunction," speaking especially with regard to Mark)² he went away sorrowful. So also with the parable of the wise man and the foolish man (7:24-27): "Whoever hears these words of mine and does not do them. . . ."³ Do these words is equivalent to saying "obey these commands."⁴

Akin to this Matthean usage is the paragraph in the first chapter of James concerned with the believers' being "doers of the word" (1:22-25). In that paragraph "the

¹Cf. Allen, Matthew, pp. 205f., with R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel, s.v.

²Albright and Mann, Matthew, p. 232. Cf. also David Hill, who remarks that "the way that leads to 'perfection'" of which Jesus speaks, "involves obedience" (Matthew, p. 283).

³Argyle writes, "these words of mine, i.e., the words of the Sermon on the Mount. Whereas the prophets had declared that wisdom lay in doing the will of God, Jesus asserts that the wise man is he who does the will of Jesus." The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Matthew (hereafter abbreviated "Argyle, Matthew").

⁴This usage is one which is found in the Old Testament, and thus is to be expected in N. T. writings which lean most heavily on Semitic thought-forms. Cf. O. Procksch, "λέγω: The Word of God in the Old Testament," Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, IV, p. 98.

word" is amplified thus (verse twenty-five): "He that looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being . . . a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing."¹ So "the word" in this context is a law which may be kept (or in which one may persevere). The law may not be equated with the entire Old Testament law, however, since James calls it "the perfect law, the law of liberty."²

Thus James has made his idea of "doing the word" clearer, and has specified the law of liberty--at the very least an ethical obligation of mercy and concern--³ indicating for him the scope of the term "word."⁴

For the other examples of the use of λόγος in Matthew's Gospel it is possible to put them all into two categories. One of these is the concept "account"--as when one settles accounts with associates in business (13:23; 25:19) or one

¹Argyle refers to this passage in James in connection with Matt. 7:24. Argyle, Matthew, s.v.

²Cf. James 2:8, 12, where the writer speaks of the "royal" law and the law "of liberty." In this context James is speaking of the command, used by Jesus as well, to love one's neighbor as oneself (Leviticus 19:18; cf. Matt. 19:19; 22:39, and other New Testament passages, as well as Matthew 7:12, where the "golden rule" is an adaptation of the same command. Twice Matthew indicates this principle as a summary of all the "law, and the prophets."). Cf. also our earlier discussion on law.

³Cf. James 2:12f.

⁴Cf. G. Kittel, "λόγος" in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, pp. 100-109. Kittel emphasizes the use of λόγος in the primitive Church to refer to the authoritative demand of Jesus, and says that the appeal to the word of Jesus outside the Gospels was done with freedom, which "can freely quote dominical sayings without express reference. Paul refers to the faith which can move mountains in I Cor. 13:2, and James has a wealth of instances . . ." (p. 108).

gives account for his actions (12:36).¹ Another is the simple meaning entailing mere words or the message of words. An example of this usage is the saying which prohibits oaths (5:37): ". . . let your word (λόγος) be yes, yes; no, no. For whatever is more than this comes from evil." The Revised Standard Version has modified this saying into, "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil": the translators have correctly rendered λόγος by "what you say."² Of the five occurrences of λόγος in the Epistle of James, only one of them is parallel to this last-mentioned usage: "If anyone does not make a mistake in what he says (ἐν λόγῳ) he is a perfect man. . . ." This is the writer's way of leading into his larger context on the use of the tongue.

James uses λόγος in other contexts: two of them have been mentioned above, in relation to being "doers of the word." In addition, it is "through the word of truth" (λόγῳ ἀληθείας) that God "brought us into being (ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς)." (James 1:18). And the readers are to put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness, and to receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save their souls. (James 1:21).

James makes it obvious in these verses that he believes "the word" (λόγος) to be an energizing and effective

¹Cf. Allen, Matthew, pp. 138, 200.

²Cf. in this connection, Matt. 10:14, 15:12, 21:24, 22:15, 22:46 and 26:44.

force,¹ and thus similar to the use of ῥῆμα in Matthew 4:4, and I Peter 1:25. Both of the latter-mentioned passages are Old Testament quotations² which use the Greek word ῥῆμα, and speak of the "word" of God as powerful. God thus activates through his word, whether ῥῆμα (Matthew and I Peter) or λόγος (James, particularly in 1:18, 21).³

Matthew incorporates one extensive passage of Marcan material in which he employs the term λόγος with the significance of (the whole of) the Christian revelation. In the passage (Matthew 13:18-23, the explanation of the parable of the Sower, from Mark 4:13-20), the first designation of the message is τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας. It is evident that this designation is not greatly different from James 1:18, 21, where "the word of truth" and "the emplant word"⁴ are descriptive terms for the means whereby we are brought into harmony with God's purpose--i.e., the whole Christian message. Since this one passage in

¹Ropes (op. cit., pp. 167, 173) interprets "the word of truth" and "the implanted word" to be "the Jewish law as understood by Christians," and refers the reader to James 1:25. It must be objected that James' entire intent is to demonstrate that one gains relationship with God, not by means of law and its works, but by God's own work--which then exhibits itself in works of love. Cf. Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 136, 137; Tasker, James, p. 49. Moffatt says, "The word of the truth as the regenerating medium had already been mentioned in I Peter 1:22f., where Christians owe their faith . . . to the gospel message of revelation." The General Epistles, p. 21.

²Matthew 4:4 is a quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3; I Peter 1:24, 25 is a quotation of Isaiah 40:6-8, and has similarities to James 1:10, 11.

³Cf. Reicke, James, Peter, and Jude, ad. loc.

⁴The similarity between "the emplant word" and the word which is sown by the Sower is obvious.

Matthew is his only use of λόγος with this connotation,¹ and since it is derived directly from his Marcan source, we may say little more about it than that Matthew avoided a narrow understanding of the term λόγος. However, one gets the feeling that Matthew typically wished to make λόγος into a word with primarily ethical implications.²

James, likewise, has used λόγος in several different ways. Ropes has combined two separate concepts of the significance of the λόγος ἀληθείας in his treatment of James 1:18:

The use of ἡμᾶς may be a reference to Christians. . . . In that case ἀπεκύησεν refers to the new birth; λόγος ἀληθείας is the Gospel. . . .

Λόγος ἀληθείας. The knowledge of God's truth and will makes us his sons (cf. vv. 21, 22, 23); the "word of truth" is for James mainly the Law (v. 25), which means the Jewish law as understood by Christians. In II Cor. 6:7, Col. 1:5, Eph. 1:13, and perhaps II Tim. 2:15 it is the gospel of salvation.³

Ropes has obviously overstated his case, of course, in speaking of the knowledge of God's truth and will as enabling us to become sons of God. That is the very point James argues against. It is not knowledge but action. (It is this distinction, as well, which is the crucial point in James' description of real faith: that which one believes is not his "faith," but that belief upon which he is willing to act, as he indicates in 2:14-17, 19).

¹Kittel, TDNT, IV, pp. 115, 121.

²Even in Matthew 13:18-23, receiving the word seems to bear some ethical implications for the new way of life. Cf. especially vv. 22, 23.

³Ropes, James, pp. 166f.

Ropes has himself included an ambivalence which grows directly from the breadth of the mode in which James speaks. If Ropes wishes to make "the word" in James' usage equivalent to "the Jewish law as understood by Christians" he denies his earlier statement, "λόγος ἀληθείας is the Gospel." Nevertheless, Ropes has sensed correctly that James wishes to give the Gospel ethical impact.

James sees "the word of truth" or "the emplant word" as God's means of bringing one to (spiritual) birth and of "saving one's soul;"¹ then immediately the person so affected by the "word of truth" has the obligation of doing the word.² Thus he also brings the ethical implications of the Gospel³ into view using the concept "word." The word then, is first an agency to effect a change in status; and then it becomes a medium to effect a radical change in behavior. In the paradigm of James, one cannot merely "look into" the word (that is, the perfect law--that of liberty); he must continue in the word, as a doer.

¹James 1:18, 21. Cf. Dibelius, Jakobus, pp. 136f.: "Dann aber bezieht sich λόγος ἀληθείας zweifellos auf das Evangelium."

²Tasker, James, p. 51ff. Cf. James 1:22ff.

³It is appropriate to use the term Gospel in this context inasmuch as James has introduced the concept of God's having "brought forth" the believer; and since James speaks of the word's being "able to save their souls." Cf. Moffatt, General Epistles, pp. 21, 25. Tasker, James, pp. 49ff.

Excursus on "Doing" and Works

The purpose of this excursus is to examine the ethic taught by James and the philosophy which underlies his ethical teaching. It is followed by a few brief remarks about Matthew's ethical program, which, in contrast to James, is well-worked ground in contemporary scholarship: the treatment of Matthew is not intended to be exhaustive, but only indicative of certain factors which give direction to Matthew's thinking.

The relationship between "faith" and "works" in the Epistle of James (especially when compared with the rest of the New Testament) is a subject of perennial interest. Kümmel writes:

A theological problem with James has existed ever since Luther (1522) established an irreconcilable antithesis between James and Paul. . . . If it proves true that there is "no actual encounter between James and Paul in Jas. 2," . . . then it also turns out to be correct that "as propositions the statements of James cannot be brought into harmony with those of the real Paul, and that there exists not only tension, but opposition, in respect to content."¹

Far from being limited to the second chapter, the subject of right action crops up with consistent repetition in the epistle.

Of special interest at this point is the relationship between "doing the word" and the works which are necessary for a faith which lives. A man who hears the word but does not do it² deceives himself, says James (1:22): he

¹Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 291f.

²"The word" here must signify either a command or

is like a man who observes his own reflection, but who "at once forgets what he is like." To know the truth, says James, is not enough: one must act upon that knowledge. Dibelius sums up, "Selbstbetrug ist das blosse Hören" (Mere hearing is self-deception).¹ (The comparison is noteworthy between this thought and that of James 2:18, 19, especially of the demons' "belief," without any corresponding action.²)

The basis for ethical action rests upon a higher authority: the Judge of all men. No man is responsible merely to himself. All of life for the believer is lived under the authority of God, the lawgiver and judge. To God all actions must be justified, before him all actions are held accountable: "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty," says James.³ "Judgment is without mercy to one who has shown (πολήσαντι)

some ethical implication of the truth. The "word" in 1:22, 23, is the same as "the perfect law, the law of liberty" in verse 25; and whether it signifies a specific command, or the ethical implication of a truth, a necessary corollary is that there is an authority higher than the hearer, to which he owes obedience. (Cf. Dibelius, Jakobus, p. 146.).

¹Dibelius, Jakobus, p. 146. Cf. also Blackman, James, p. 64.

²As Dibelius points out, the "belief" attributed to the demons (the attribution is drawn, evidently, from the Jewish and syncretistic literature--see analogous examples, Dibelius, p. 197), is not a Christian creed but a creed derived from the Shema (Deut. 6:4). It is "kein glaube, der 'retten kann.'" (Dibelius, Jakobus, pp. 196f.).

⁴James 2:12. God is pictured as judge of word and works; and the focus is on a judgment which is certain to come.

no mercy."¹ The focus is, to be sure, on the person who has failed to show mercy, but looming large in the thought behind the passage is the impending judgment. "There is one lawgiver and judge. . . ."²

The "law of James" (by this term we mean ethical principles as understood by James) may be rather simply expressed. In addition to the two commandments of the Decalogue (those on murder and on adultery which he cites as illustrative examples in 2:11), he bases most of his ethical exhortation on what he calls "the royal law (according to the scripture): 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (2:8)."³

From this law of love the writer of the epistle derives a firm egalitarianism: no man is above another; all are at one level under God, responsible for "fulfilling" or "filling up" the law of love.⁴ On the basis of this one category, James sets forth these principles:

"Show no partiality." (2:1, 9)

¹James 2:13.

²The concept of eschatology in James and Matthew enters here, and this is the topic of a later chapter. It must be noted, however, that James has built his ethical system heavily upon a foundation of eschatological accountability. Cf. in this connection also I Cor. 3:12-15, II Cor. 5:1-11.

³The statement is "if indeed you fulfil royal law according to the scripture . . . you do well." Royal law is anarthrous, perhaps signifying the character of the law as a ground for action, rather than its demand per se (Cf. Mayor, James, p. 90, where an analogous claim is cited, from Westcott, for anarthrous references to God).

⁴The phrase νόμον τελεῖτε is found in the New Testament only here and in Romans 2:27. (Cf. Mayor, James, p. 90).

In honoring one man do not dishonor another. (2:6)

Give to the needy things which will relieve the need.
(1:27, 2:16)

Do not curse any man, for he is made in the likeness
of God. (3:9)

Do not have bitter jealousy or selfish ambition.
(3:14, 16)

Do not be insincere, but instead be pure, peaceable,
gentle, reasonable and full of mercy and good fruits.
(3:17, cf. 1:27a)

Do not fight among yourselves. (4:1)

Do not covet. (4:2)

Do not speak evil against a brother or judge him.
(4:11, 12)

Do not defraud another; be fair in your dealings.
(5:4)

Be honest in deal with others. (5:6)

Do not even grumble against one another. (5:9)

These twelve principles all may be derived from the
single elemental commandment which James calls the Royal
Law: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"; and they
make up the major proportion of the epistle's ethical
teaching.

In addition to these, (and not so directly derived from
the law of love), James would list the following principles
of right conduct and attitude:

(1) The believer must practice the right use of the
mind and tongue.

-Let every man be quick to hear, but slow to speak
and slow to anger (1:19, 20)

-Put away all filthiness and wickedness (1:21)

-Bridle your tongue (1:26)

-The test of self-control is control of the tongue
(3:2-8)

- Do not boast and be false to the truth (3:14, 4:16)
 - Humble yourselves before the Lord (4:10)
 - Do not speak evil against one another (4:11)
 - Do not swear (5:12)¹
- (2) Hedonistic self-indulgence is not appropriate for the believer.
- Keep yourself unspotted from the world (1:27b)
 - Wisdom and understanding should be demonstrated by a good life (3:13)
 - Jealousy and selfish ambition issue in disorder and vile practices (3:16)
 - Selfish desires cause wars and fightings (4:1, 2)
 - Selfish desires even alienate one from God and his gifts (4:3, 4, 8)

Summing up the ethical statements of James, he seems to have a philosophy which may be stated as follows:

God is over all. No man is independent of him, for all will be judged by him. Since all men will be judged, no man has any natural superiority to any other. All men are to be treated with honor and respect equally as the Royal Law says: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

The right use of life includes the right use of the mind and the tongue, for both must be held in check. Self-discipline must take place in other areas of life, as well, for the believer's life must not be one of hedonistic self-indulgence. Right intention can never be a substitute for right action, especially when acts of mercy are needed.

The ethical-philosophical system of the writer of the Gospel of Matthew has been examined carefully by a number of scholars,² and so it is not necessary to retrace all

¹Most of the foregoing are related to the use of the tongue, and easily relate themselves to the love of one's neighbor as oneself, as well.

²Cf. especially W. D. Davies, The Setting of the Ser-

of the groundwork here. The thought included in the Gospel is based on several ideas which coincide with those of James, which we have discussed immediately above.

Davies writes:

At the climax of Matthew's treatment of the Christian interpretation of the Law, Christian worship and Christian loving kindness, Matthew has placed vii. 12, which is known as the Golden Rule. . . . But it is in the Epistle of James that the words of Jesus break through more often than in any other document outside the Synoptics, while at the same time they are subsumed under a single principle, the law of love.¹

One of the areas where similarities exist between the approach of James and that of Matthew regarding the ethical implication of the Gospel is in the expectation of the judgment: "In none of the other Gospels is the expectation of judgment and the exhortation to the doing of God's will so prominent as in Matthew. . . . Among the Gospels only Matthew contains detailed descriptions of the final judgment."²

For Matthew "doing," rather than merely speaking the right things, is the basis of life in the Kingdom. He contrasts doing the will of the Father with merely saying the words, "Lord, Lord." The parable of the two sons

mon on the Mount, pp. 94-108; 235ff., 402; Albright and Mann, op. cit., pp. CVI ff.; also pp. 57ff., pp. 183ff., 224ff., and pp. 276ff.

¹W. D. Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 402.

²Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's understanding of the Law," in Bornkamm, Barth, Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew, trans. Percy Scott (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 58f. A more complete investigation into Matthew's description of the judgment than is possible here will be included in the next chapter.

further contrasts those who merely speak of obedience with those who practice the will of the Father.¹ Hill writes:

The words in the way of Righteousness (which some try to interpret as a reference to John's own personal righteousness) denotes that "way of righteousness, in obedience to God, which John demanded of those who heard him and which he himself practised": this is the path that leads to the Kingdom.²

The commandment to love is also stressed as primary motivation in Matthew's Gospel. Rigaux observes.

Love of God and of neighbor belong to the doctrine common to the Synoptics. Mt. gave it his own treatment. Not only does he make it a leit-motif, stressing love of neighbor more than love of God but, in very basic₃ formulas, taught its practice in various ways.

In most of the Sermon on the Mount the idea of the Christian's motive is the important factor in the ethical exhortation. Thus, for example, in the Antitheses, actions are seen as the result of attitudes. The proper attitude for a citizen of the Kingdom in these teachings is precisely that expressed in the Epistle of James: one is not to regard himself as above any other person; he is to maintain strictly the approach of the Royal Law, loving his neighbor as himself.

One must not suppose that Matthew's teaching about the law is simple;⁴ it is not to be equated with that of

¹Matthew 21:28-31.

²David Hill, Matthew, p. 298.

³Beda Rigaux, The Testimony of St. Matthew, trans. by Paul Joseph Oliny (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), p. 171. Cf. also McNeile, op. cit., p. 57, passim. In this motivating commandment, of course, Matthew comes to precisely that point of concern held by James.

⁴In regard to the tensions involved, cf. M. Jack Suggs,

James, not least because of its greater complexity. Nevertheless, there is nothing in the philosophical-theological understanding from which he derives his ethical system that is not compatible with that of the Epistle of James.¹ In particular, Matthew's emphasis on the law of Love of Neighbor, his emphasis on the negative motive--the judgment of God--and his admonitions on the use of words are all found as prominent parts of the ethical structure of James. Moreover, since there are specific similarities between the two documents--uniquely so, for example, in the case of the prohibition against oaths--the case for a connection between the two writings is supported.

Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 112-115. Cf. also Bornkamm, Tradition and Interpretation, p. 25.

¹Cf. Davies, SSM, pp. 402ff. It is necessary here once again to bear in mind that we are comparing two documents of quite different lengths, and styles. Matthew, ten times longer than James, is also much more complex in his ethical expression. Therefore it is well to point out the similarities in the ethical approach: in addition to those mentioned here, we point out that the groundwork for ethical living in both writings lies in a necessity for humility before God.

CHAPTER NINE

ESCHATOLOGICAL JUDGMENT

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In the preceding chapter I have said that Matthew's Gospel uses the thought of Judgment as one strong reason to practice right behavior. In this chapter I will compare the thought patterns of our two documents--the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle of James--in regard to the parousia, judgment, and other aspects of so-called "futuristic" eschatology.¹ Because the Epistle of James has a limited approach to these concepts, in that its eschatological concern is almost exclusively centered around what might be termed the "criteria for eschatological judgment."² I will similarly narrow my consideration of the Gospel of Matthew, focusing on eschatological judg-

¹Matthew's framework for eschatology differs from that of other portions of the New Testament (for example, The Gospel of Mark) more in degree than in kind; though Robert A. Spivey and D. Moody Smith Jr., in Anatomy of the New Testament (London: Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1969), p. 137, write, "Indeed the close of Matthew (28:16-20) would make no sense if the evangelist held an extreme, futurist eschatology." By use of the term "futuristic" I mean eschatology which either includes the concept of judgment or which is apocalyptic in character.

²This is in keeping with the analysis, reported in the previous chapter, that James strongly emphasizes the consciousness of a coming judgment as rationale for right ethical choices. Bo Reicke, in his exposition of the text of James, divides the epistle into twelve sections. It is surprising to note that the thought of Judgment or of God as Judge appears prominently in James in eight of Reicke's twelve divisions. Each of the five sections covering the last two chapters includes thought of judgment (James 4:4, 6, 9, 10, 12, cf. Reicke, op. cit., p. 47; James 4:15, cf. Reicke, p. 54; James 5:12, Reicke, p. 56.

ment, rather than broadening the examination to include all that Matthew has to say about eschatology, e.g. the Messianic Kingdom, the Resurrection, or signs of the end. By far the majority of what Matthew says about eschatology concerns precisely this: eschatological judgment.

Bornkamm's essay on "End-expectation and Church in Matthew" (the first part of Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew), examines the futuristic aspects of Matthew's Gospel in their relation to ecclesiology. Bornkamm rightly points to one basic motif in Matthew--that of the missionary task, which is to announce the nearness of the kingdom of God and to carry out the signs of it.¹

Matthew speaks of the day, or more explicitly the day of judgment, frequently; eight times in all. For him it is a day in which mercy will not be known, and the condemnation of judgment will be surprising, even to those who are judged: "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven . . . on that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me. . . .'"² Similarly, in the parable of the maidens: "'Lord, lord, open to us.'

¹Bornkamm, Tradition and Interpretation, pp. 17f. Bornkamm in this place refers specifically to the missionary charge to the disciples in 9:35-10:42. However, with little modification the same could be said for the "missionary" approach of John the Baptist (3:2ff), of Jesus (4:17, 11:2-6), and of the apostolic commission in 28:18-20

²Matthew 7:21ff.

But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

The Day, and the Day of the Lord, as descriptive phrases, are found frequently in Old Testament contexts. The basic thrust of the phrase is often (though not invariably) eschatological.¹ A general statement of the significance of the day of the Lord is "time for God to act."² Within this framework God was often seen as acting through contemporary events in behalf of Israel. In post-exilic prophecy the day of the Lord took on the flavor of a day of salvation for Israel, with destruction and judgment for enemies (the Gentiles). It is in these latter prophetic writings that full-fledged apocalyptic-eschatological statements become associated with the Day of Yahweh.³

Matthew's use of "the Day of Judgment"--the exact phrase appears four times--extends apocalyptic judgment and destruction to Israel, instead of limiting it to Israel's enemies. In three of these four occurrences, a strange statement appears: ". . . it shall be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah . . ." (or "Tyre and Sidon," or "Sodom" alone)

¹Cf. G. von Rad, "'Day' in the O.T.," TDNT, II, p. 944.

²So Ernst Jenni, "Day of the Lord" Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, I, 784f. Martin Rist speaks of the "Day of Yahveh" as signifying "an awful day of divine retribution, vengeance, destruction, and judgment." The prophet Amos warned his readers that the Day of the Lord would not be the "day of light" which they had expected, but a "day of darkness" (Amos 5:18-20).

³Von Rad, op. cit., pp. 945f.

". . . than for you." The condemnation of "the day of judgment" will be more harsh for unresponsive witnesses of Jesus' ministry, consisting largely of Israelites (and particularly those of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum)¹ than for cities which had long since in infamy been consigned to destruction, and whose names had become associated with great wickedness, even for cities which had never been friendly toward Israel.²

To a large extent the criteria of judgment in Matthew's gospel are related closely to his understanding of the law: especially to the ultimate responsibility of every man to

¹Allen writes, "The men of Capharnaum dwelt in a flourishing city, of which they were proud. But they had failed to appreciate the true significance of Christ's works, and need expect no better fate than the judgement which overwhelmed the inhabitants of Sodom" (Matthew, p. 121). But in fact, Jesus' warning is that their fate will be notably worse. Oddly the commentaries, generally, omit reference to the judgment aspect of this passage, though it is the major point of the passage: and I refer to Allen because he makes some reference to it, however weak.

Although his commentary is not of major significance and is written in narrowly Roman Catholic terms, Jones comments more fully: "Our Lord's miracles were signs of the imminence of the kingdom . . . and the necessary preparation for the kingdom was penance, 4:17. The kingdom (and, therefore, the miracles) were first offered to Israel, but Israel refused the penance, Tyre and Sidon themselves, coastal cities of pagan Phoenicia and typical of those beyond the pale, would not have so refused. . . . In the final assessment of guilt, therefore, rejection of a divine invitation will turn the scale." (Alexander Jones, The Gospel According to St. Matthew: A Text and Commentary for Students (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), p. 139.

²Plummer comments on the sin of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, saying that it "was not violence or sensuality but indifference. . . . Self-satisfied complacency, whether in the form of Pharisaic self-righteousness or in that of Popular indifference, is condemned by Christ more severely than grosser sins. . . . The confidence with which Jesus utters His judgments as being identical with Divine judgments is all the more impressive from its being implied and not asserted." Plummer, Matthew, p. 165.

the law of love. In 5:48, as W. D. Davies points out, Matthew includes an antithesis which

goes back to Jesus himself. Here the understanding of the love of neighbour is taken radically by Jesus over against the tradition of Qumran which allowed, and indeed demanded, hatred of those outside. The centrality of love in the teaching of Jesus appears elsewhere in the Synoptics in Mark xii. 28-34; Matt. xxii. 34-40; Luke X. 25ff. And while the commandment to love cannot be found frequently on the lips of Jesus himself, nevertheless the NT as a whole makes it a justifiable assumption that this was a central theme of his teaching.¹

Chapter twenty-five expresses well these criteria. All good deeds done sincerely² will be rewarded as if the good deed had been done to the Messiah himself (cf. Matt. 25:40; 18:5; 10:41, 42). By an extension of the figure, an attitude toward another is considered as if it were displayed toward Jesus himself.³

It is well known that deeds are primary among the criteria of judgment in Matthew. Davies says:

the words under which the disciple stands are most emphatically presented as the words of Jesus himself: the commandments of the Sermon are his to be obeyed (this is the least that can be said of the phrase, "But I say unto you" in the antitheses), and it is as his words that they constitute the standard of judgement on the Last Day. . . ."⁴

¹Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 431. Cf. also Davies' treatment, Ibid., pp. 401ff., and in the IDB, II pp. 167-176, especially pp. 168f.

²In Matthew good deeds done in order to be seen of men already have received all the reward they deserve (Matt. 6:2, 3).

³Cf. A similar figure in Proverbs 19:17; Albright and Mann quote Mekilta, tractate Amalek, 3: "He who welcomes his fellow-man is considered as though he had welcomed the Shekinah." Albright and Mann, Matthew, p. 133.

⁴W. D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 94.

From the preaching of John the Baptist, in which the preacher emphasizes the necessity of "bringing forth good fruit" to escape destruction (3:8-10),¹ to the parable of the sheep and goats referred to in the previous paragraph (25:31-46), deeds are a recurrent theme. The Son of Man ". . . will repay every man for what he has done (κατὰ τὴν πράξιν αὐτοῦ)" (16:27).² The parable of the talents, which Matthew makes into a consistent and coherent story from Q material,³ should also be mentioned here, though the reason for judgment is somewhat different. The rewards or punishment are meted out on the basis of the results obtained, which in turn were based on the actions (=deeds) of the servants. The servant who did not act properly is called worthless (ἀχρεῖον--v. 30). But this epithet is used not merely because he wasted an opportunity, but be-

¹"The fruit is not the change of heart, but the acts which result from it." McNeile, Matthew, p. 27. Allen paraphrases, "Repent, and act as only men who have repented can act." Allen, Matthew, p. 25.

²This verse has an allusion to Psalm 62:12, "And mercy is thine, O Lord, for thou wilt recompense every one according to his works" (κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ - LXX). The O.T. verse refers clearly to rewards for good works; but the immediate context implies harsh judgment for those who are "vain," "false," and "deceitful." This Matthean context will result in the sort of deeds which themselves will result in condemnation. Cf. Hill, Matthew, p. 265.

³Matthew has glossed over or purposely smoothed out the inconsistencies in the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27): I refer particularly to the intrusion of the citizens' rejection (Lk. 19:14) and the judgment of them at the end (19:27) and the parenthetical response, "Lord, he has ten pounds," (Lk. 19:25), as well as the omission by Luke in the latter part of the story of seven of the servants to whom earlier distribution had been made. It is my assumption that Matthew has modified the story, and that Luke followed the Q version more closely.

cause in the face of his master's charge he was faithless.¹ By his own admission he made a judgment about the master. He did not consider his master worthy of his faith or confidence,² and because of this the deeds demonstrate his own unfaithfulness.

Therefore, although deeds enter into the story, the point is that deeds are seen as an expression of inner trust.

Again, in Matthew 7:19-23, deeds in themselves are not the entire issue, but the proper deeds, done for proper reasons. Activity in the name of the Lord such as prophesying in his name, casting out demons, and doing mighty works (certainly these are "good" deeds), is not sufficient. As Plummer comments, our expressions of devotion "may have been so fervent that they have influenced others for good . . . , and produced wonderful results. In spite of all that they may be worthless, because they have lacked reality: they have not been done in the spirit of love."³

¹All three servants were given talents "according to their ability" (25:15), so none is excusable on the basis of not being able to invest the talents properly. The other two servants receive the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (ἀγαθὲ καὶ πιστέ). Though the specific responsibility they were charged with is not revealed in the parable it is evident that the former two were faithful to the intent of the master. They demonstrated this faithfulness in their actions.

²Matthew 25:24, 25. McNeile says, "'Wicked' and 'slothful' are the counterpart of 'good' and 'faithful.' His want of faithfulness is shewn by sheer laziness." (McNeile, Matthew, p. 366). In fact, however, it is apparent that his laziness is a result of his faithlessness. Inasmuch as he had no confidence in his master's good will and fairness, he did not commit himself to his master's wishes.

³Plummer, Matthew, p. 117. Cf. I Cor. 13:1-3.

Even charismatic endowments are not sufficient to stay the judgment of Christ.¹ The only proper activity is doing the will of the Father in heaven. One begins to get the idea that attitude is important in Matthew, at least as much as deeds.²

It is plain in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (20:1-16) that the wages are not given on the basis of the amount or number of good deeds done--that somehow other factors, such as the grace of the householder, are involved in calculating the reward. It is worthy of note that the owner has not cheated anyone by giving him less than he deserves; rather, the only complaint that can be lodged is that he has given some more than they deserve.³

At the end of the apocalyptic discourse in chapter twenty-four, the promise is made that there will be reward for the "faithful and wise servant" whom the master finds doing the proper thing at his return. But what is the proper thing? It is merely the distribution of the master's food to the master's household (24:45f.). By straining somewhat we could interpret this as "doing good deeds," perhaps. But the more natural emphasis is that

¹Cf. Hill, Matthew, p. 152.

²Cf. the discussion centering on sin and evil, below (pp. 216 f.).

³McNeile comments: "'If I may do what I will with my own property, the only explanation for your conduct is that you are envious because I am liberal.'" McNeile, Matthew, p. 285. The contribution the passage makes to Matthew's theology is one of diminishing the emphasis on deeds and works, and of projecting the element of grace.

the servant is to act as a representative for his absent master. The food is provided by the master; the household is his as well. But the servant is elevated and commended merely for being a trustworthy person and representing his master properly.¹ And in fact, in the negative case which is presented next as a contrast (vv. 48ff.), the wicked servant is not merely one who neglects good deeds, but "begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken." He is punished for being the antithesis of the master's expectation.

In another passage, even the disciples, who "will . . . sit on twelve thrones . . ." in the new world, are given this honor not because of their good deeds, but because they have sacrificed comforts and families,² which they might otherwise have been entitled to enjoy, for the sake of the Messiah (19:27ff.). "And the last verse of the section indicates that late-comers into the Kingdom of God will be treated on an equality with those who have come in first."³

In understanding the Gospel of Matthew, deeds must be put in their proper place. They are rewarded or lauded if they spring from the appropriate motive, i.e. from the great underlying philosophical motif in Matthew, the "law

¹Cf. Hill, Matthew, p. 325. Schlatter speaks of the disciple: "Die Frage sagt ihm, dass es jetzt in seiner Hand liege, wie er seinen weg ordne, ob er das Empfangene treu bewahre und die ihm zugeteilte Pflicht mit klarem Blick erfasse." (Schlatter, Matthäus, p. 717.).

²Cf. Hill, Matthew, p. 284.

³Tasker, Matthew, p. 189.

of love" (Matthew 19:19).¹ Otherwise they are useless.

The Sermon on the Mount is filled with exhortations to perform good deeds: but in each case the proper motive is presupposed.²

Another criterion of judgment is one's responsible use of words. Matthew extends the synoptic saying on the so-called unpardonable sin by using the figure of the good and bad trees which bring forth fruit appropriate to their nature; and he follows with the (exclusively Matthean) statement,

I tell you that in the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter. For by your words you will be justified,³ and by your words you will be condemned.

¹Davies says, "Just as the command to love one's neighbour in v. 43f. is radicalized in v. 48 in terms of perfection, so it occurs in xix. 19 to be radicalized in xix. 21 also in the same terms. Perfection in both passages is rooted in the new interpretation of the law which Jesus has brought." Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 212. See also pp. 43lff., 404f.

²Cf. Matthew 6:1ff. as an example. The alms are deeds of mercy, but gain no reward from God if the motive is not right. The proper motive is not spelled out, but underlying is the thought of real concern for the sufferer. This is how one causes his light to shine before men so they may see his good deeds, while at the same time he has a righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. McNeile says, "To make one's good deeds a θέατρον for an admiring audience . . . is to be a ὑποκριτής. . . ." The sharp contrast is not in the deeds, but in the inner motivation--precisely in the fulfilling of the Law of Love.

³Matthew 12:31-36. Cf. in this regard the insult or the hurled epithet in 5:22; and the judgment on account of it. "Not only good and bad, but even 'idle' words must be accounted for. . . . A ῥῆμα ἄργόν (α-έργον) is one that does not, and is not intended to, affect anything." (McNeile, Matthew, p. 180).

A further criterion in Matthew's consideration of eschatological judgment is the category of sin and evil. The word group related to ἁμαρτία is not found with great frequency in Matthew: only fifteen times in all. Of these fifteen, nine are parallels from Marcan material, and three others are evident uses of, or developments from, sayings in Q. In both of these groups sin is seen as something to be confessed or forgiven.¹

In Matthew, however, there are also three references which use ἁμαρτία or ἁμαρτάνω which are exclusive to that Gospel; and these are of some significance. The first such reference is in the Joseph pericope in chapter one: "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (1:21). This is Matthew's first chapter cover-term for the mission of Jesus: he will save his people from their sins. Schlatter says:

Der Anfang und der Ausgang Jesu sind zusammengeschaut. Wie er durch sein Kreuz die Vergebung der Sünden herstellt, so wird ihm bei der Geburt die Gottessohnschaft und die königliche Sendung deshalb gegeben, damit er "der Retter vor den Sünden" sei. Wie Mat. imstande war, trotz der kreuzigung Jesu und trotz der Verfolgung der Jünger durch die Judenschaft in der Rettung Israels das Ziel Jesu zu sehen, zeigen die verheissenden Worte 19,28, 23,39. In seiner endgültigen Offenbarung wird Israel Jesus als den Retter erfahren, der die Folgen seiner Sünden tilgt.²

¹The people came to John the Baptist in the wilderness, "confessing their sins;" in the healing of the paralytic the crucial point at issue was whether Jesus had "authority to forgive sins;" except for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, "every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men." (Cf. Matthew 3:6, 9:2ff; 12:31 and parallels).

²Schlatter, Mätthaus, p. 20.

The fact that this statement on Jesus' mission of forgiveness (1:21) has significance for Matthew's theological position is supported by Matthew's unique addition to the pericope in which are the words of institution for the Lord's Supper. Here (26:28) Matthew says "this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."¹ While the reference to the new covenant implicitly carries with it the idea of a relationship which is built or advanced through a mighty act, it is Matthew who spells out in this context the theology of forgiveness² through the death of Jesus.

Summing up Matthew's statements on sin, both those which he includes in common with other synoptic writers

¹The Markan parallel says, "this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many." Luke's statement is, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Paul's account in I Cor. 11:25, likewise omits reference to the idea that Jesus' blood is shed for the forgiveness of sins. Matthew had taken this phrase away from John the Baptist's teaching as it is reported in Mark 1:4. For Matthew the baptism of Jesus had no element of forgiveness, because there was no need. But forgiveness comes through the New Covenant, instituted by Jesus. (Cf. Argyle, Matthew, p. 201). Matthew's third unique reference to sin is in Judas' confession, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood," and is not germane to our present discussion.

²It is understood, of course, that all of the gospels speak of forgiveness: but it is Matthew who most plainly ties forgiveness with the death, or shed blood, of Jesus. "The reference is to Exod. xxiv. 4-8, ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης, the inauguration of God's covenant with Israel at Sinai. Jesus inaugurates a covenant for those whom He had drawn from the old Israel. . . . This unmistakably includes the thought of sacrifice, i.e., the application of the victim's blood, which is its life, poured out, set free from its body, and available for the use of others." (McNeile, Matthew, p. 382. Cf. also Allen, Matthew, pp. 276f.) Matthew's earlier postulate, "he shall save his people from their sins," is clarified and defined in this passage.

and those which are unique to him, our statement is limited to this: sin is an offense committed either against God or against man;¹ it is to be confessed or forgiven;² and Jesus maintained authority in his life and by his death to forgive sins or save people from sin.³ In spite of the effects of sin in human life (cf. 26:45), yet Jesus willingly associated with those who were known as "sinners" (9:10-13, 11:19).⁴

In thinking about futuristic eschatology in Matthew, another category--closely related to sin but not called by that name--must be considered. For lack of a better term I think of it as insubordination: that is, unwillingness to accept the Divine Order in which God has placed all things. Throughout this Gospel there comes the constant message that if one will submit himself to certain things his life will be free of negative aspects and will be full of virtues. But as long as a person is not submissive, life cannot be so.⁵ Matthew then makes it clear that one's

¹12:31 and 18:15, 21, may be cited as examples.

²Cf. 3:6; 9:2, 5, 6; 12:31; 18:21.

³Cf. 9:2, 5, 6; 1:21; 26:28.

⁴In Matthew 8 and 9 Jesus demonstrates the fact that his approach to people is different from the traditional approach in Israel. His healing authority is exercised in healing a leper (8:1ff.), a Gentile (8:5-13), and a woman (8:14-17). "Their healing may indicate that those types excluded from the benefits of religion in Judaism are made nigh by Christ." (Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 90). The association with "sinners" further demonstrates his unwillingness to be constricted by old forms.

⁵This is also a concept basic to wisdom literature in general. Matthew's Gospel is not, strictly speaking, wisdom literature, but it draws heavily on wisdom motifs.

approach to life determines the degree of condemnation or reward which will be his.

Great tensions are pointed to by Matthew because of this insubordination. An example is Matthew 15:1-9. Jesus pointed out the insufficiency of the "tradition of the elders" as a rule of life, by demonstrating that the tradition is directly counter to the spirit of the command of God. "Matthew makes it clear that the teaching of Jesus is not in antithesis to the written Law of Moses, though it is critical of the oral tradition."¹ To accept that tradition, and thus to "make void the word of God" is to refuse to be submissive to God and to those things which God has chosen.

One can easily make the obvious connection between Matthew's statement "it was out of envy (διὰ φθόνου) that they had delivered him up" (27:18)² and his earlier statement, "he who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me" (10:40). By rejecting Jesus and delivering him up out of envy, the chief priests and elders were also rejecting him who had sent Jesus.

It is Matthew who makes reference to Jesus in the pericope on the healing of the paralytic, saying, "why do you think evil in your hearts?" Mark and Luke make the quest-

¹Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 105.

²Matthew's statement here is a modification of the Marcan statement (Mk. 15:10), and in contrast to the declaration in 10:40. (Cf. Mk. 9:37, Lk. 10:16). See C. G. Montefiore, The Synoptic Gospels: Library of Biblical Studies, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1968), II, p. 154.

tion of Jesus on the scribes' (and in Luke, the Pharisees') lack of belief: "why do you question?" Matthew sees that the questioning is symptomatic of the scribes' rejection--they have not subordinated or submitted their thinking to the way God chooses to rule the world: and therefore by questioning Jesus' authority they think evil in their hearts. Schlatter, says, "πονηρόν ist das, was sie denken, weil es nicht unter der Regel der Liebe steht."¹

For Matthew, no man who has not accepted the rule of God in the world can have a life which is good. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; . . . you brood of vipers! how can you speak good when you are evil? (Matthew 12:33f.)

"Their words cannot help being bad, for they have bad hearts. . . . That which fills the heart flows out of it."²

God's sovereignty is an important element in all this. God has chosen not to manipulate his creatures, but he is pleased to act through them and to interact with them. Although the world and its happenings are permeated with the evil which results from men's greed and ill will; yet one who is not reconciled to the world as it is and to events as they come³ is in reality rebelling against God.

¹Schlatter, Matthäus, p. 300.

²Montefiore, Synoptic Gospels, II, 196.

³The caution against anxiety in the Sermon on the Mount is emphatically a call to faith in God's sovereignty and providence; and a challenge to accept life in the world as under his dominion. To act out of anxiety over circumstances is to earn the epithet "little faith" (Matt. 6:30). "Jesus is calling for absolute faith and trust in the

God has chosen to allow men to be just or to be unjust: and he does not send sunshine and rain only to those who are just.¹ No man has the right to assume that his own sense of right, or of fairness, is superior to that of God;² for in doing so he would in insisting that the Father is in some measure inferior. "Let God be God" is the theme, therefore. And under His sovereignty one can celebrate the goodness of God, and one's own creaturehood.

The tenants, in the Parable of the Vineyard and the Tenants, were to be put "to a miserable death" because of their rejection of the householder as lord of the vineyard.³ They expressed this rejection by the way they treated the householder's servants and his son (Matt. 21: 33-41). Whether or not any householder of Jesus' day had the right to put tenants--even murderous ones--to death,

providence of God's love." (Argyle, *Matthew*, p. 59) The Matthean form of the Beatitudes is a further example of his urging disciples to the obedience of trust.

¹Matthew 5:45.

²Cf. the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16), which has as its point this very idea, that it is God who is free to choose--specifically in the area of his generosity. "Its main concern is to declare the sovereign grace and good-will of God. . . . It is addressed to those who resembled the grumblers." (Hill, *Matthew*, p. 285). Cf. also the statements in the same chapter: "To sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." (Matt. 20:23).

³Each of the six parables which Davies (*Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 332) points out as being peculiar to Matthew--The Two Sons (21:28-32), The Vineyard Tenants (21:33-43), The Wedding Feast (22:1-14), The Ten Virgins (25:1-13), The Talents (25:14-30), and The Judgment of the Son of Man (25:31-46) has the element of judgment and exclusion.

Jesus makes it plain by these words that to reject God's rule brings eschatological judgment. In the following parable--that of the marriage feast--rejection of the king in a similar way brings severe judgment--"he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers. . . ."¹

The concept of judgment appears often enough in Matthew to warrant the statement that for the Evangelist life which does not accept the rule of God will issue in God's judgment. All the world is seen as reflecting the order of God in some way. So, to dishonor Jesus is to dishonor God.² Likewise, to dishonor a disciple of Jesus is to reject Jesus. Going a step further, to fail to honor "one of the least of these . . . brethren" (Matt. 25:40, 45) is to dishonor Jesus (and by extension, the Father).

This principle of extension explains the condemnation of the person who is angry with his brother, or insults him, or calls him a fool. What God has accepted must not be rejected.³

¹Some commentators, e.g. K. W. Clark, "The Gentile Bias in Matthew," J.B.L., LXVI, pp. 165ff. have seen this emphasis on judgment as indicative of God's final rejection of Israel. Davies (Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 332) counters this as short-sighted, and contends that the "struggle between Christianity and Judaism was still for him a struggle intra muros." (Ibid.) The judgment theme in the Matthean parables, if Davies is right, must be society, rather than to an entire nation.

²Cf. Matthew 10:40f.

³This principle may also shed light on Matthew's puzzling inclusion of the "exception clause" on divorce. Divorce was a rejection of one's wife: is she was acceptable to God she must not be rejected by her husband; but if she were guilty of an impure act, then her acceptability to God is not so clear, and divorce may then be permitted (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). It is not so easy to explain

In summary, the subject of eschatological judgment comes to the fore in Matthew's gospel in several categories: he speaks of "the day of judgment" as a day of condemnation upon those who have rejected Jesus, especially in view of the fact that he has done mighty works in their midst. A "Day of the Lord," similar to that familiar in the prophetic literature will be extended to Israel's cities, first on the basis that their citizens had witnessed Jesus' ministry and had disbelieved. The criteria of judgment are further related to (2) Matthew's understanding of the law, especially the law of love; (3) rewards or punishment will come on the basis of the results obtained, though deeds themselves are useless unless they spring from love; (4) judgment may be lessened or reward increased because of the grace of the householder, God; (5) faithfulness as God's representative wins its reward; as does (6) the sacrificing of comforts and family life, and (7) responsible use of words. (8) That which brings harsh judgment is sin and evil, and (9) insubordination to God's sovereignty and his order of things.

The statements on judgment in the Epistle of James are more easily encompassed than those in the Gospel of Matthew. Excepting a passage in the final chapter about which we shall have further comment, all the relevant passages can be contained in one paragraph. The man who "has stood

love of one's enemy (5:43f.), but in the atmosphere of Matthew's Gospel, which (along with other New Testament writings) accepts persecution as an occasion of blessing and rejoicing, to reject the persecutor may indeed be to reject an act of God.

the test" by enduring trial will receive the crown of life (1:12).¹ The believer will be "judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment"² (2:12f.). "There is one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy." (4:12)³

From the three statements in the Epistle of James which are listed in the paragraph above, we may deduce only this about the judgment: that there will be a judgment; that God is the only one competent to judge; that the result of judgment may be negative (to destroy) or positive ("to save," or to "give a crown of life"): and that the characteristic of judgment for one who has shown no mercy will be judgment without mercy, while on the

¹The "crown or wreath of victory is also mentioned as a representation of eternal reward in I Cor. ix 25; II Tim. ii 5; iv 8; I Pet. v 4; Rev. iii 11. . . . The author wishes to emphasize that the present trials will affect their reward, the gift of eternal life, since they furnish the believers an opportunity to prove their love to God" (Reicke: James, Peter and Jude, p. 17). Ropes observes, "Eternal life as the reward for the friends of God was a fundamental idea of later Jewish and of Christian eschatology." (Ropes, James, p. 152).

²Moffatt says, "Specific commands rise out of the central unity of the law of brotherly love, to which Christians owe obedience and by which at the end they shall be judged. . . . James puts this truth dramatically; the judgment at the end will be merciless to the man who has shown no mercy, . . . the merciful life will triumph in the face of judgment." (Moffatt: The General Epistles, pp. 36f.).

³"Backbiting others is, in fact, a subtle form of self-exaltation . . . he that speaketh evil of his brother is in fact so lacking in humility that he is behaving as though the divine prerogative of judgment had been assigned to him. . . . There is only one lawgiver whose laws are of permanent significance and whose judgments are of eternal validity." (Tasker, James, pp. 99-100).

other hand, mercy is able to mitigate the effects of judgment.

In the final chapter of the epistle, James rebukes the rich in strong terms. As Moffatt says, "the style resembles the rhythmical oracles of the Hebrew prophets."¹ The wrong-doing of the rich is that they have fraudulently kept back the wages of laborers who worked in their fields. They have used this money to enhance their own standard of living; but the corrosion on the coins themselves is pictured as an element in punishment: "their rust (corrosion) will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire" (5:3). The time of this retribution is "a day of slaughter" (5:5), "the last days" (5:3). The passage begins by mentioning the miseries which "are coming upon" these rich men. "The tone is thus not of an appeal to evil-doers to reform (contrast 4:7-10 and even 4:13-17), but of a threatening of judgment."²

The concept of "the day" or "the days"³ is similar to that found in Matthew (7:22; 10:15; 11:22ff. passim), when it is time for a final judgment of men. The evil which brings harsh judgment in James is disobedience to the command to love and unwillingness to accept the per-

¹Moffatt, The General Epistles, p. 67.

²Ropes, James, p. 282.

³"You have laid up treasure for the last days" (5:3). "You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter" (5:5). "The last days are the days of judgment, when punishment shall be awarded." (Ropes, James, p. 287, cf. also p. 290).

sons whom God accepts.¹ In this connection we must consider further statements in James 5. In verse 6 the writer makes a devastating accusation, stark and powerful in its simplicity.

You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man (τὸν δίκαιον). He does not resist you.

These rich men (not necessarily among the actual readers of the epistle²), were guilty of condemnation of the righteous (who is spoken of here in the singular). It is a wrong which could have limitless application in individual cases. Those who are most likely to have occasion to commit such a wrong are those who have gained power, i.e., the rich. Ropes writes:

The rich are judges, or at any rate control the courts. . . . Oppression which unjustly takes away the means of life is murder. . . . Every kind of cruel conduct leading to the death of the poor and righteous is doubtless meant, including in some cases actual murder--whether violent or judicial (e.g. the execution of Stephen)."³

Verse nine says, "Do not grumble, brethren, against one another,⁴ that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors." To grumble against a brother

¹See again Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 404ff.

²Cf. Ropes, James, p. 282.

³Ropes, James, p. 291. The Christian readers would surely think also of the judicial destruction of Jesus, who also "did not resist" those who subjected him to judgment. However the major emphasis of the verse is that of acceptance to replace condemnation.

⁴Moffatt says, "He is repeating the admonition of iv 11-12, 14f. against quarrelsomeness and carping judgments on one's fellow-members." Moffatt, General Epistles, p. 73.

would bring judgment, apparently because it would stem from an attitude of rejection toward one whom God has accepted.¹

Also included in the last chapter of the Epistle of James is a word of hope concerning "the coming of the Lord." Although the author does not spell out the relationship between "the last days" and "the coming of the Lord," it is conceivable, and even probable, that these concepts are seen as contemporaneous by James. The difference would then be that of viewpoint: For the rich man who has acted with malice toward his workers the last days are "a day of slaughter," while for the brother who patiently endures trial without failing in it the last days are "the coming of the Lord" to bestow the coveted reward, the crown of life.

Thus, for James, judgment centers around the responsibility accompanying the law of love, the "Royal Law." To the degree that one disregards this law, his actions will exploit others, and his life will likewise be under the judgment of God. Judgment is certain, and will be without mercy to those who have shown no mercy, but tempered with (perhaps even replaced by) mercy, for the merciful (2:13). In this James and Matthew are closely similar (cf. Matt. 5:7; 7:14f.; 18:26-35; 23:23; 25:40, 45, inter alia). The spirit of the two writings is closer, on this point espe-

¹This assumes that the term "brother" is reserved for fellow-Christians and that these Christians are the accepted "people of God," as in I Peter 2:9f. Cf. also Romans 2 and Romans 9-11 for the concept of believers as the people of God.

cially, than with any other New Testament documents. Judgment, condemnation, and mercy are seen by James and Matthew from the same point of view.

CHAPTER TEN

COMPARATIVE RELATIONSHIPS OF A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC TEXTS

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The purpose of the present chapter is not at all to provide a commentary to the portions of the Epistle of James and of the Gospel of Matthew which it compares. Such an approach would be both inappropriate and superfluous: inappropriate, in that this chapter has only to make the case for the high degree of relationship between the documents we have concerned ourselves with rather than to explain the meanings of all words and phrases within that relationship; and superfluous in that at least five of the previous sections of this thesis have sought to look into the theological viewpoint of the authors of James and Matthew. These sections have demonstrated a high degree of correlation in the theology. For us to provide a detailed commentary on passages previously examined would be, in some measure, redundant.

But, on the other hand, it seems appropriate to set forth an actual side-by-side comparison of the passages which are used. In connection with these comparisons it is thought to be helpful to provide some explanatory comments; and in view of the fact that it is the comparison of the two documents which is crucial, some summary of the similarity which exists will be made.

Matthew 5:34-37

(On Swearing)

Again you have heard that
it was said to the men of
old, 'You shall not swear
falsely but shall perform to
the Lord what you have sworn.'

But I say to you, Do not
swear at all, either by
heaven, for it is the throne
of God, or by the earth, for
it is his footstool, or by
Jerusalem, for it is the
city of the great King.

And do not swear by your
head, for you cannot make
one hair white or black

But let what you say be simply

"Yes" or "No";

Anything more than this comes
from evil.

But above all, my brethren
do not swear,
either by heaven,
or by earth,
or with
any other
oath

But let your yes be yes
and your no be no,

that you may not fall under
condemnation.

πάλιν ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη
τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, οὐκ ἐπιορκήσεις,
ἀποδώσεις δὲ τῷ κυρίῳ τοῦς
ὅρκους σου. ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν

μὴ ὁμόσαι ὅλως· μήτε εὖ τῷ ἀδελθοί μου, ὁμνύετε μήτε
 οὐρανῷ, ὅτι θρόνος ἐστὶν τὸν οὐρανὸν μήτε τὴν γῆν
 τοῦ θεοῦ. μήτε ἐν τῇ γῇ,
 ὅτι ὑποπόδιόν ἐστὶν τῶν ποδῶν
 αὐτοῦ.
 μήτε εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ὅτι μήτε ἄλλον
 πόλιν ἐστὶν τοῦ μεγάλου
 βασιλέως.
 μήτε ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου ὁμόσης, τινὰ ὄρκον.
 ὅτι οὐ δύνασαι μίαν τρίχα
 λευκὴν ποιῆσαι ἢ μέλαιναν.
 ἔστω δὲ ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν ναὶ ναί,
 οὐ οὐ. ἤτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ Ναὶ ναὶ
 τὸ δὲ περισσὸν τούτων ἐκ τοῦ καὶ τὸ οὐ οὐ, ἵνα μὴ
 πονηροῦ ἐστὶν. ὑπὸ κρίσιν πέσητε.

The concepts of oaths and the practice of swearing by
 an oath was ancient:¹ but likewise it was not a new idea
 to discourage the taking of oaths. Josephus reports that
 the Essenes did not swear;² while there was a warning
 "against any and all oaths as early as Choerilus Epicus"³
 in the fifth century B.C. The noteworthy point concerning
 the message of these two passages is that they are the

¹Cf. J. Schneider, "ὁμηύω," TDNT. V, 176ff; "ὄρκος," TDNT, 457ff.

²Josephus, Wars of the Jews, II, 8:6.

³Cf. the reference to this in Bauer, Lexicon (English ed.), p. 569. A great number of similar references may be adduced, as for example Sirach 23:9-11; 27:14. Cf. also Dibelius, Der Brief des Jakobus, p. 295.

only passages in the New Testament which forbid oaths.

In the epistles, neither oaths nor swearing are mentioned outside of the Epistle of James and the Epistle to the Hebrews. In each of the contexts in Hebrews the oath is God's.¹ Likewise, in the Gospels, Luke speaks of God's oaths--to Abraham and to David.² Mark's Gospel refers to oaths twice; and in both cases they have unfortunate overtones. It was the oath of Herod, along with the presence of his guests, that caused Herod to command the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:23, 26. Cf. also Matt. 14:7ff.) In another incident reported by Mark (and included also by Matthew) Peter denied with a curse and with swearing that he knew Jesus.³ Matthew has included these two events, sharpening them somewhat, and has expanded the material on oaths beyond the Marcan presentation with two other references. Both of them have aspects which are strongly negative.

In Matthew's discourse of woes against the Pharisees (chapter 23), Jesus condemns the "blind guides" for their attitude and practice concerning oaths, though he does not

¹Heb. 3:11ff., 4:3; 6:13ff.; 7:21. In summary they are as follows: God swore in wrath that the disobedient Israelites would never enter into the promised land ("into my rest"); God swore in an oath that he would bless Abraham; and he swore that Jesus would be made "a priest for ever."

²Luke 1:73 and Acts 2:30.

³Matthew adds a further reference to Peter's oath, making even clearer Peter's disobedience to the intent of our present context. Peter's sin, of course, was not primarily that he swore by an oath; but the negative approach of Matthew toward oath-taking has a measure of consistency with the episode of denial.

appear to condemn the practice as a whole. The passage states that in Pharisaic practice certain oaths were not considered binding: e.g., to swear by the temple or by the altar "is nothing." On the other hand, oaths by the gold of the temple or by a gift on the altar were considered binding.¹ Jesus' attitude is that they were playing games; he insisted that all of these oaths were alike in validity, and that to disregard such an oath would be blasphemy: "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by him who dwells in it; and he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it."

It is in the context of the Sermon on the Mount that Matthew has his strongest words to say against swearing. The Mosaic law sought to control the use of oaths, in order to impress upon the user the seriousness with which he spoke. On the other hand, however, Jesus' preaching of the guidelines of the Kingdom of God emphasizes the lack of necessity for oath-taking by members of the Kingdom.

He who already belongs to the Kingdom, and is controlled by its concepts and powers, may not act as though he were still bound to this aeon. He must be truthful in all things; hence he stands under the requirement not to swear at all.²

In a manner similar to that which we have seen in Matthew 23, here also the statements of expansion (" . . . for it is the throne of God" etc.) make explicit

¹Matthew 23:16-21.

²Schneider, Ibid., p. 178.

the concept that to remove the oath from the person of God to such things as heaven, earth, or Jerusalem makes it no less an act of swearing by God himself. Even to swear by one's own head is deceptive, for a man does not have ultimate power over his head.¹

Schneider suggests that the "authentic form of the saying of Jesus is preserved in James 5:12 rather than in Matthew." He infers that James is not dependent on Matthew for his formulation of the saying, but rather derived it from an independent tradition, since many ancient Christian texts quote the saying in a form which is similar to that of James.²

These two passages, when placed in parallel, reveal a very close similarity in pattern and wording. Matthew's directive, "do not swear at all (ὅλως)" is no stronger as a prohibition than James' "do not swear;" but it only points up the contrast between what was said to the men of old and the present exhortation.

As common examples of oaths, Matthew mentions first an oath sworn by heaven. So also does James. Secondly, both authors mention "earth." Matthew continues with two

¹The implicit lesson must therefore be that since it is God who does have such ultimate power, for one to swear even "by his head" could be traced back to God who is the power over that head.

²Schneider, *Ibid.*, p. 182. Cf. also Dibelius, *Ibid.*, pp. 297ff. Dibelius agrees that the saying in James is from an independent tradition rather than being derived from Matthew. He is content, even further, to assume the priority of the form of the saying in James. He does not foreclose the possibility of its citation as a saying believed by the writer to be an authentic Jesus-quotation (pp. 298f.).

other examples: Jerusalem, and one's own head; while James merely sums up the matter with the simple words, "or with any other oath." So, in the first part we see the initial prohibition in nearly identical terms, and two primary examples in the same order. It is significant that even in James, who has a greatly shortened form of the saying, there is recognition that other examples of oaths might have been adduced.

In the latter part of the saying, in strikingly similar language, both writers use first the imperative of the simple verb to be, though James has selected the less common form ἦτω for ἔστω; then they both include a repeated form of both the affirmative and the negative. Finally, each of them feels that a reason is required.

Upon examination it is evident that there are nine different elements in the sayings upon which they coincide.

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. (direct address) | (direct address) |
| 2. "do not swear | "do not swear |
| 3. either by heaven | either by heaven |
| 4. or by earth | or by earth |
| 5. or . . . | or . . . |
| 6. but let it be | but let it be |
| 7. of you | of you |
| 8. yes, yes; no, no" | yes, yes; no, no" |
| 9. (reason) | (reason) |

One might make a case for an accidental similarity for as many as two or three such similarities, though to include them in precisely the same order would be harder to

rationalize. But the fact that there are nine such points of contact, and all nine are in exactly the same order, points to some common source.

From our earlier examination of the style and genre of the epistle (Chapter 2) it seems evident that a saying will not be attributed in epistolary writing directly to its source; but it will be used by the author as from the general fund of knowledge which he is passing along to his readers. Naturally, such a statement does not have all the marks of direct discourse. It will often be abbreviated¹ or condensed, and one would expect it to be treated in a way which has a considerably more general application than it had in its original context. This is true of parenetic material in general,² and of many of the references in James discussed below.

The statement forbidding oaths, as it appears in Matthew, becomes quite explicit, while the form in James is shorter, more general, and has a personal parenetic application ("that you may not fall under condemnation") at the close.³

¹The opposite is true for the writer of a gospel, who is expected to represent direct discourse, and who does not write in his own name. If he has a germinal idea or terse aphorism he may frequently be expected to expand it into a fuller statement, or to qualify it and give it a contextual relationship to narrative or to teaching material.

²Cf. Schneider, *Ibid.*, especially p. 182, n.64, for references and examples. The Epistle of James is, of course, comprised very largely of parenesis.

³The application, or reason, at the close of the passage in Matthew is less personal ("anything more than this comes from evil").

There are, to be sure, distinctions between the sections on oaths in James and in Matthew, but it must be observed that these are the only New Testament writings which include such a command. Oaths are not mentioned in Paul's writings at all; Mark, Luke, the writer to the Hebrews, and the Seer of the Apocalypse all mention oaths as if there were little thought, in their sections of the Church, of the evil of an oath. This, in sum, draws the tradition of Matthew and James close together.

None of the following examples of similarities is as close in parallel as the one we have just examined. Some of them, if seen in isolation, would be of little importance. But it is the abundance of them which is significant. In the brief Epistle of James, consisting of 108 verses in all, I number some twenty-one separate references which are in varying measure echoed in the Gospel according to Matthew.¹

Both Matthew and James exhort the reader to be joyful in the face of trials (James 1:2, Matthew 5:11f.). In this regard there is little verbal contact between the two writings, but the comparison with respect to the eager acceptance of testing must also include the reference to the persecution of the prophets in James 5:10f.

James 1:2

Matthew 5:12

πᾶσαν χαράν

χαίρετε καὶ ἀγαλλιᾶσθε

¹It may be noted from the following discussion that the echoes in Matthew are to be found in by far the greatest measure in Matthew's special material or in Matthean redaction of synoptic material.

James 5:10f.
 τοὺς προφῆτας . . .
 μακαρίζομεν

Matthew 5:11f.
 μακάριοί ἐστε ὅταν . . .
 διώξουσιν . . . οὕτως γὰρ
 ἐδίωξαν τοὺς προφῆτας

The subjects of these passages are the same, and so also is the purpose--to confirm the willingness of believers to remain faithful as they undergo suffering and persecution.¹

The concept of suffering and tribulation certainly was not a rare one to most of the primitive Church.² And it must be recognized that a great number of New Testament passages exist which, in one way or another, attempt to prepare believers for the persecution which was to come or which had already arrived. Even the idea of rejoicing in the face of persecution was not otherwise unknown (cf. Romans 5:3f; I Peter 1:6).

Another of the characteristics of testing for the believer is that it "produces steadfastness" (ὕπομονή) (James 1:4). And, says James, "steadfastness has to have its full effect (ἔργον τέλειον) so that you may be perfect (τέλειον) and complete, lacking in nothing. We introduce

¹The latter passage in James (5:10f.) follows the exhortation not to grumble against each other; but that exhortation actually is imposed upon the larger context concerning patient endurance (5:7-11). This concept is used otherwise in James (cf. 1:12ff.).

²Cf. especially E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: Macmillan & Co., 1964), pp. 439-455. Selwyn examines the variety of persecution passages.

here a verse which will be discussed more fully in the next section (p. 241ff).

James 1:4

Matthew 5:48

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον

τέλειον ἔχετε,

ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς

ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι . . .

τέλειοι . . .

In Matthew at first reading the corresponding passage appears quite different in meaning. Matthew 5:48 says "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This sounds like an idealistic but impossible exhortation.¹ In fact, however, in the larger context of Matthew 5:43-48, the saying is the capstone of the command to love one's enemy--i.e., one's persecutor (v. 44). Thus, though it is not central, persecution is inherent to the context of both passages, and a first point of contact is established.

James includes no command to love the persecutor.² His concern is that the believer should be a whole person: perseverance, or steadfastness, is the means by which he becomes whole in this sense. Matthew's concern also is wholeness; and he too envisions a wholeness which comes forth out of the milieu of persecution. But Matthew does not speak here of steadfastness as such, but rather love of enemy.

¹Cf. the discussion of the Matthean over against the Lucan form of this saying, cf. p. 61.

²On the contrary, he seems to disparage favorable treatment of the persecutors and opposers in 2:6f.

Being whole (τέλειος) in both its Matthean contexts applies to persons who are faced with choices. The rich young man (Matthew 19:16-22) is told, in response to his question ("what do I still lack?") that to be whole (τέλειος) he must loose himself from that which separates him from God.¹ So here in the Sermon on the Mount the "disciples" are told that in order to be whole, as God is whole, they must behave toward even their enemies as God does. He is not divided; he pours forth favor and goodness on the evil, and he gives his gifts to the unjust.²

It is a test of one's steadfastness to ask him to show genuine concern for his persecutor and his enemy. With this sort of interpretation one may see similarities between the two passages at hand.

The verbal similarity between the passages rests largely on the adjective τέλειος.

James 1:4

And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Matthew 5:48

You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

¹Cf. Delling, "τέλειος," *TDNT*, VIII, p. 74. On the Matthean use of τέλειος cf. also W. D. Davies, *Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 209-215. Davies says that the Church of Matthew "emerges as a community called to 'perfection' through its understanding . . ." but it is an understanding which "rests on the true understanding of the Law as given by Jesus" (pp. 214f.). Likewise, and in consonance with our point, Davies says: "Only in connexion with moral obedience does the term 'perfect' explicitly appear in Matthew" (p. 215).

²Delling, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον	ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι
ἔχετω, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι καὶ	ὥς ὁ πατὴρ...
ὁλόκληροι, ἐν μηδένι	ὁ οὐράνιος
λειπόμενοι.	τέλειός ἐστιν

The word in its earliest stages of use means "whole," or, when used of sacrifices, "without blemish."¹ The meaning has a number of applications, but never moves far from the sense of "mature"² or "complete."³ For Plato, the man who was τέλειος was one who has achieved φρόνησις (rightmindedness)--the one who has insight and philosophical knowledge. Such a man is complete, and lacks nothing.⁴

For Aristotle, an ethical flavor is included: such a man (the τέλειος ἄνθρωπος) has the absolute good. It is not difficult to comprehend how the step from "complete" to "perfect" can be made; for now the ethical proposition becomes practicable.

For the Stoics, τέλειος became a more normative concept: it is the Stoic who uses the virtues, who lacks nothing for the τέλειος βίος."⁵ This paves the way for the Dead Sea Sect, which asserted that walking perfectly means "full observance" of the right norm, keeping all the rules

¹Homer, Iliad, I, 66.

²Herodotus, I, 183, Cf. also Hebrews 5:14.

³Aristotle, Metaphysics, IV, 16.

⁴For this discussion of τέλειος I am indebted to Delling, TDNT, VIII, pp. 68ff., and to Bauer, Lexicon, pp. 816f.

⁵Delling, TDNT, VIII, p. 70.

of the community.

Both Matthew and James appear to avoid the ethical perfectionism to which much of the modern use of the term has led.

In James, the concept is that a man should be "whole" and complete, lacking in nothing. In his discourse on the tongue, as well, the same author speaks not of a "perfect" man, but one who is whole; "For we all make many mistakes, and if anyone makes no mistakes in what he says he is a whole man, able to bridle the whole body also." (3:2)

It would be ludicrous to use the tongue as the only indicator of perfection, since perfection is comprised of many elements, including the ability to love one's neighbor. James himself has pointed out that lip-service¹ is hardly sufficient for expression of that love. The conclusion to which we are forced by this passage is that James does not believe that anyone can be perfect. But whether he believes in the possibility of wholeness may not be so easy to perceive. "For we all make many mistakes, and if anyone makes no mistake in what he says he is a 'perfect' man. . . ." It appears likely that James' intent is to indicate that such a state is impossible to attain. Yet in view of the earlier statement ("Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete,

¹"If a man says he has faith"; and "if one of you says . . . 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled'" (2:14, 16) are two ready examples. The word must correspond with the deed, and right intention is not enough.

lacking in nothing."), it seems that such a state is a rational goal.

The translators of the Revised Standard Version have chosen to translate τέλειος with the word "perfect." But the more appropriate significance is "wholeness."¹ Delling suggests that both Matthew and James intend to convey this concept of wholeness, normally in relation either to God or to men. "In Matthew 5:48 the 'whole' applies to conduct in relation to men. God is fully 'undivided' in this."² This is scarcely the normal connotation of the English word "perfect."

The similarities, in summary, are these. (1) Both writers speak of 'wholeness'; (2) both of the references arise in the context of the believer's response to persecution; (3) both further describe the wholeness of which they speak--James by adding ". . . and complete, lacking in nothing," Matthew by saying "as your heavenly Father is whole."

James 1:5, 17

Εἰ δέ τις ὑμῶν

λείπεται σοφίας,

αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ δίδοντος

θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς . . . καὶ

δοθήσεται αὐτῷ

Matthew 7:7, 11

Αἰτεῖτε, καὶ δοθήσεται

ὑμῖν·

κρούετε, καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται

ὑμῖν.

¹In the history of the word, of course, "wholeness" is also the earlier and more basic concept.

²Ibid., p. 74.

πᾶσα δόσις ἀγαθή . . .
 ἄνωθέν ἐστιν, καταβαίνον
 ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων

If any of you lacks wisdom,
 let him ask God, who gives
 to all men generously . . .
 and it will be given him.
 . . . Every good endowment
 . . . is from above, coming
 down from the Father of
 lights . . .

. . . εἰ οὖν ὑμεῖς
 πονηροὶ ὄντες
 οἴδατε δόματα ἀγαθὰ
 διδόναι τοῖς τέκνοις
 ὑμῶν, πόσω μᾶλλον
 ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς
 οὐρανοῖς δώσει ἀγαθὰ
 τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν.

Ask, and it will be given
 you; . . . If you, then,
 who are evil, know how to
 give good gifts to your
 children, how much more
 will your Father who is
 in heaven give good things
 to those who ask him!

Between these two rather extended passages there seem to be some six obvious elements of comparison. On the initial assumption of some human need, they both give the directive that in such a need one should "ask." The verb αἰτέω is in the imperative mood in both passages (in the third person in James, and in the second person in Matthew's quotation). At the end of the clause both have chosen the direct and simple future passive, "καὶ δοθήσεται" with the appropriate pronoun ("to him" in James; "to you" in Matthew).

James continues with a brief description of the sort of faith which is necessary for an answer to prayer, and

the concept of double-mindedness, to which the Lord does not respond with his gifts. Then, after seven intervening verses, James returns to the concept of God the giver. In this statement, particularly in verse 17, the writer of the epistle uses language which sounds quite close to the words of Matthew 7:11, in the Matthean context we have been considering:

Every good endowment (δόσεις ἀγαθή) and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father (τοῦ πατρός) of lights . . ." (James 1:17). Matthew's statement is ". . . how much more will your Father (ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν) who is in heaven give good things (δώσει ἀγαθά) to those who ask him!

This statement in Matthew is largely from the (hypothetical) Q source,¹ and is reproduced nearly word for word in Luke 11:13. It is the difference between Luke's δώσει πνεῦμα ἅγιον and Matthew's δώσει ἀγαθά which makes this comparison important. In an earlier chapter I have compared the Matthean and the Lucan versions of this saying and have concluded that the statement as it stood in the source must have included the words, "Holy Spirit," and that the term "good things" is a result of Matthew's redaction.²

¹It is interesting to note that this is a very rare occurrence, that any parallel between James and Matthew should also be a parallel with any other New Testament document. The James-Matthew parallels are almost exclusively in uniquely Matthean material.

²Supra, pp. 183f. In brief, the evidence is this: contrary to the opinion of most commentators, Luke is not eager to import the concept of the Holy Spirit into his gospel; whereas the Holy Spirit is mentioned at least nine times in the first four chapters. After the fourth chapter the Holy Spirit is only mentioned four more times in the remainder of the gospel--once warning concerning blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (12:10); once concerning Jesus'

One might postulate that Matthew had a written copy of the Epistle of James, and that he used this document (or an early form of it?) as a loose sort of "subject reference" for the inclusion of certain key concepts. Or perhaps one might more simply and still plausibly assume that both Matthew and James were familiar with a certain theological tradition (perhaps even a tradition which they believed included ipsissima verba of Jesus). In any case the similarity of the verbalization in these two passages appears once again to demonstrate the close connection of the two books.

Summing up the similarities between Matthew and James discussed in this section, they consist of

- (1) the imperative form of αἰτέω
- (2) the respondent phrase "and it shall be given"
[you/him];
- (3) the title for God: πατήρ;

(4) the occurrence of the adjective ἀγαθός (used as a substantive in Matthew, however) in combination with a form of δίδωμι (in James, a noun form from the verbal idea): "δόσεις ἀγαθή"; "δώσει ἀγαθά". Though in this latter case the grammar is quite different, yet the actual form of the words is quite close: one suggests the other.

rejoicing "in the Holy Spirit," (10:21); once promising a future teaching by the Holy Spirit (12:12); and the present Lucan context, again apparently a promise for the future (11:13). It appears that Luke was quite careful not to introduce the Holy Spirit when he wrote about the time of Jesus' ministry: therefore, if he included this reference the probability is that Luke has not changed ἀγαθά to πνεῦμα ἅγιον, but that Luke has carefully represented his source, and that the change is Matthew's.

James has a further context on "asking": this one, however, has a different thrust. In the fourth chapter of his epistle he shows special concern over the selfish desires of his readers, and the disturbances in the Christian community of which they are a part. He blames these passions (ἡδοναί), which are at war within, for the coveting and fighting among the readers.

James 4:3

Matthew 7:7

You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Ask, and it will be given you.

οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι Ἀίτεῖτε, καὶ ὑμᾶς. αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε, δοθήσεται ὑμῖν. διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε.

Although it is not possible to determine with complete certainty the viewpoint of James as to the "warfare" of these ἡδοναί--whether they war against God; against men (the believers); or against themselves,¹ it is certain that this warfare has its further effect in the community (verse 1).

¹Cf. Gustav Stählin, "ἡδονή," *TDNT*, II, p. 922, n.82. The answer to the question most probably lies with the first two of these three alternatives, in view of the present context, especially James 4:1 and 4:4.

Stählin calls attention to the conflict within, which Paul attests in Romans 7--the conflict of the law of his mind with the law of sin which resides in his members. (In the same vein, Paul spoke of the antagonistic relationship of the flesh and the spirit in Galatians 5:17.) In the same way, it may be that, against the best impulses of the readers of the Epistle of James, they were succumbing to ἡδοναί.¹

To counter this problem, James reminds the readers that there may exist two reasons for unfulfilled desires: first, that no request has been made;² and second, that the request is made from an improper motive, that is, to spend it wastefully upon one's ἡδοναῖς.

The inclusion of this passage in James makes quite plain the obviously-needed correction to other statements on prayer. Not every prayer is answered, not every request is granted: the nature of the world would have to be radically different if it were otherwise. In the face of his earlier statement of assurance (1:5ff.), James adds this correction. (Cf. also I John 5:14.)

Commentators have asked the obvious question concerning the juxtaposition of the middle and the active forms of the verb αἰτέω: i.e., is there a difference in the significance?

¹Ibid. Cf. also Dibelius, Jakobus, pp. 259.

²James has a strong emphasis on believing prayer, not only here but also in 1:5-8, and 5:13-18; in fact, in twelve of the 108 verses.

Within verses two and three--indeed, within the course of nine words--the verb αἰτέω is used three times; in the first and the last of the three uses, the middle voice is used, while in the second occurrence it is the active. Most commentators of this text agree (evidently on the basis of similar juxtapositions in I John 5:15; Mark 6:22-25; 10:35, 38; Matthew 20:20, 22) that there is no distinction that can be seen.¹ Blass says that James and I John make the variation arbitrarily,² although J. H. Moulton replies, "It is not easy to understand how a writer like James could commit so purposeless a freak as this would be."³

In fact, it may be that James is not being arbitrary at all, but that he favors the use of the middle voice for this verb. The only other context in which James employs the verb αἰτέω is in 1:5, which we have suggested is a direct reference to the word of Jesus. Here, too, it ap-

¹Cf. as examples, Dibelius, Jakobus, p. 262; Windisch, Die Katholischen Briefe, p. 27; Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich, p. 25, "ask, ask for, demand (without any real distinction between the active and middle. The distinction between active ('ask' outright) and middle ('ask' as a loan) found by ancient grammarians has only very limited validity for our lit. . . ; cf. Js. 4:2f, where they seem to be used interchangeably)." But on the contrary interpretation, cf. Mayor, ad. loc., and Alexander Ross, The Epistles of James and John: New International Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), p. 76. In both of the latter, the concept which is seen as key is that αἰτέω in the middle is thought to be asking from the heart, while the active voices is a perfunctory use of right words, but without inner feeling: "the words, without the spirit, of prayer."

²Blass-Debrunner (ed. and trans. Funk), op. cit., pp. 165ff.

³J. H. Moulton, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, Vol. I: Prolegomena, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908), p. 160.

pears that James has in mind the same word of Jesus, though it is given a negative application. Kittel writes:

the question exists as to whether the variation between 4:2 and 4:3 may not have its origin in that the author himself in general uses the middle, but that in the Greek tradition of Jesus-sayings which was familiar to him the active was given. He shapes the proposition and speaks for himself with the middle form: "You do not have because you do not ask . . . you ask wrongly"--both times αἰτεῖσθε; but between the two the saying of Jesus intrudes: "You ask and do not receive," and here the form becomes active, αἰτεῖτε, because the word of Jesus, "Ask and you shall receive" is stamped with an active αἰτεῖτε."¹

Kittel's solution seems to me convincing; and it also stamps the Matthean (Q) form of the saying, as from Jesus, the more primitive. To be sure, James has not had his habitual use of the word formed by the Q saying, and thus his shift here becomes significant in suggesting that he followed the same form of the Jesus-tradition which is also found in Q.

There are yet other considerations in the matter of which of these sayings may retain the more primitive form. It is apparent that the simple synonymous parallelism of Matthew 7:7, 8 (=Luke 11:9, 10) is primitive, and appears in a style feasible for a first-century wisdom-teacher. Whether the style is attributable to Jesus, or to composition by the compiler of Q is difficult to determine. Black, at one point in his discussion of considerations of style, appears to indicate that "the parallelism of lines and clauses still discernible in both Matthew and Luke" is a key to finding the authentic voice of Jesus. But in an-

¹Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort . . . ," p. 89.

other place Black speaks of the writers (specifically Matthew, in the passage under his consideration) forming the material in "free literary paraphrase, [and] . . . that Q in Matthew is not just a translation: it is a Greek literary composition."¹ If that is true of the Beatitudes,² which are full of the style of parallelism which often marks the primitiveness of a passage, then it becomes problematic to determine what form of a saying may be the more primitive: how can one be certain what is genuinely untouched by redaction or by the voice of the community, and what is the saying in a poetized form shaped by the hand of a skilled writer?

In an earlier chapter, on "The Word," we have considered the passages James 1:22 and Matthew 7:24ff. They are included here in parallel form only for the sake of completeness.

James 1:22

"But be doers of the word,
and
not hearers
only,

deceiving yourselves."

Matthew 7:24, 26

"Every one then who hears
these words of mine and does
them will be like a wise
man. . . .

And every one who hears
these words of mine and does
not do them will be like a
foolish man. . . ."

¹M. Black, An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts, 3d ed. (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 156, 187f. (hereafter abbreviated Aramaic Approach). Emphasis is Black's.

²Black, Aramaic Approach, p. 187.

James 2:5

"Listen, my beloved
brethren.
Has not God chosen those who
are poor in the world to be
rich in faith and heirs of
the kingdom which he has
promised to those who love
him?"

Matthew 5:3, 5

"Blessed are the poor in
spirit, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven. . . .
Blessed are the meek, for
they shall inherit the
earth."

To the former of these two Matthean beatitudes Luke has a well-known parallel: "blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Ladd calls attention to this fact and suggests as the probable Aramaic word standing behind Luke's "poor" and Matthew's "poor in spirit": 'anawim. These people are the humble poor, in contrast to the rich, whose tendency is toward haughtiness and pride. Thus Matthew can be quite specific and correct in the addition of his qualifying phrase, " . . . in spirit."¹ Kittel also affirms the underlying concept 'anawim, and adds further that for "the meek" the Aramaic background is 'anijim:

with James 2:5 we may compare the two beatitudes concerning the πτωχοί and the πραεῖς, which both speak of the same people: the 'anawim, the "'anijim," the poor and oppressed--so that the two words of the biblical Greek may be equated and interchanged.²

¹George Eldon Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), pp. 64f.

²Kittel, "Der Geschichtliche Ort . . . ," p. 85f. Cf. a similar construction in Black, Aramaic Approach, p. 156. Black further says, "There is impressive textual support

If we may consider Kittel's approach correct, these people who are meek-and-poor are promised that they possess the kingdom, and that they shall inherit the earth. The approach of James is that God's choice has been to make the poor rich in faith and to let them inherit the kingdom "which he promised for those who love him."

The similarity therefore is this: both James and Matthew speak of (1) the poor, (2) the Kingdom, and (3) inheritance. (Luke speaks of the first two of these, but not in this context of the third.) Kittel comments further on this passage by referring to the beatitudes as "promises which God has spoken by the mouth of Jesus," and relates this to James' phrase, ". . . which God has promised. . . ." Behind this kind of thought is the further concept, common in both James and Matthew, that poverty in outward circumstances is not to be equated with poverty of life.

As for the contrasts between the passages at hand in James and in Matthew, it must be said that it is quite different to inherit the earth and to be heir of the kingdom which was promised, unless one envisions a promised kingdom which is limited to the earth. It is neither Matthew nor either of the other synoptists who frankly state that the kingdom "is not of this world," but statements such as that in Matthew 8:11--"I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac,

for taking Matthew's first and third Beatitudes together. . . . Together these verses form a four-line stanza. . . ." loc. cit.

and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven . . . "--give a definite timeless cast to thoughts about the kingdom in Matthew. Likewise, Matthew says "the Son of man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and throw them into the furnace of fire. . . . Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father." (13:41-43). These passages and others like them indicate that for Matthew, whether the kingdom is limited to the earth or not, it is not limited to the present time-scale.

If Black is correct, that "our Lord's Beatitudes were originally cast in poetic form,"¹ and that since the textual evidence supports Matthew's first and third Beatitudes being taken together, they form a four-line stanza, each couplet containing two lines in synthetic parallelism, and the second couplet in synonymous parallelism with the first,"² then the meek in the third corresponds to the poor in spirit of the first; and more important for our present purpose, the phrase "they shall inherit the earth" corresponds with "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The phrase which is synthesized in James 2:5 is separated and individualized in these synonymous couplets. Whatever the relationship of James 2:5 and Matthew 5:3, 5, it seems somewhat closer than that of James 2:5 and Luke 6:20 (for reasons stated above). It is difficult, though not impossible, to imagine direct de-

¹Black, Aramaic Approach, p. 156.

²Ibid.

pendency in either direction.¹ Black has reminded us precisely at the point we are considering, i.e. the Beatitudes, "that Matthew is doing some Greek 'targumizing' of Q on his own," and that Q in Matthew falls into the category of a "literary composition." Further, Black suggests that it is "not improbable" that Matthew "collated 'parallel versions' of sayings which he found in his special source with Q sayings,"² which is not to say that Matthew is responsible for the creation of the Beatitudes, but that he may be responsible for the shaping of them.

The following passages have been discussed in some length in the "excursus on works" attached to the chapter on "the word."³ However, again for the sake of a greater completeness, I include them.

James 2:8

The royal law according
to the scripture,
"You shall love your
neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:37

And he said to him, you
shall love the Lord your
God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and
with all your mind. This is
the great and first command-
ment. And a second is like
it, you shall love your
neighbor as yourself. On

¹Ibid., pp. 187f. (Cf. also Harald Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition, trans. E. Margaret Rowley (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 12ff.)

²Ibid.

³Supra, pp. 197ff.

these two commandments hang
all the law and the prophets.

One key question in regard to this passage in James has to do with the curious reference to the "royal" (βασιλικόν) law. Is James here making a reference to the Kingdom of God, in the New Testament sense? Or, as Ropes and others suggest, is he using the term "as a decorative epithet describing the law as a whole, of which the following precept is a part?"¹ In view of the prime importance of the concept of the Kingdom in the New Testament (particularly in the synoptic gospels, some 104 times in reference to the Kingdom of God/Kingdom of Heaven; and more particularly in the Gospel of Matthew alone--some 50 references), we should not be too quick to eliminate this concept from our consideration.

Ropes, commenting on this passage, says that "law" here should not be taken to refer to the commandment quoted immediately: "νόμος is not used in the sense of ἐντολή."² He is correct in that statement. However, it was the statement of Jesus that on this commandment, together with one other ("You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.") depend all the law (ὅλος ὁ νόμος) and the prophets.

Returning then to the question of the significance of James' term "royal," is it not at least possible that James

¹Ropes, James, p. 198. Cf. also Mitton, James, pp. 89f. and Dibelius, Jakobusbrief, pp. 177f.

²Ibid.

was fully aware that this command had such significance, and that it was an authentic word of the Lord¹ the King?

It is not our intention to suggest on the basis of this present comparison any dependency between Matthew and James. The similarity is not great, but the fact that James included this saying and that more than three-fourths of the New Testament books do not, may add one more clue to the puzzle of the origins of the Epistle of James.

Matthew 5:21, 22

James 2:11

You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire.

For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become a transgressor of the law.

The fact that Matthew in the "antitheses" of the Sermon on the Mount follows his reference to the sixth commandment with reference to the seventh is not surpri-

¹Certainly it is accepted as an authentic word of Jesus by the synoptists and by Paul. Cf. Mark 12:28ff; Luke 10:25ff., Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:9.

sing. Nor would we wish to attribute any special significance to the fact that James has included reference to both of these commandments, and no others (albeit in reverse order), when he speaks in this context of the law. The surprising thing is that he appears to accuse some among his readers of murder,¹ though he does not accuse them of adultery.² This is difficult to reconcile with James' recurring use of the phrase "my beloved brothers." If these readers were beloved (Christian) brothers, it is

¹Cf. 2:11 with the statement in James 4:2, "You desire and do not have; so you kill . . . you wage war. So also in 5:6: "You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man" (the latter addressed specifically to the rich).

²If the text of James 4:2 is not corrupted (a hypothesis for which there is no early evidence but the difficulty of the passage itself), then James may be in the present passage preparing his readers for the force of his argument there: he will say, "You want something which you cannot have, and so you are bent on murder" (New English Bible). The very fact that he is about to accuse them, speaks of his own presumption of their guilt. This is so whether they were in fact guilty or not: the fact that the writer believed them to be offenders on that point--either literally or, much more probably, metaphorically--makes the present context more significant. If he believed that his argument on murder would hit home, and also believed them to be adulterers (he will use the feminine form of this term in 4:4 but does not mean the word with sexual connotations, but rather in the sense of unfaithfulness toward God; this term is well represented in both the RSV and the NEB as "unfaithful creatures"), then this part of his case is singularly weak. If he had believed them guilty of transgressing both of these commandments, his argument would have been couched in different terms. He speaks of these two points of the law: he evidently believes that his readers are guilty of one of them, and his point is lost if they are guilty of both.

There is the admitted possibility that Erasmus' conjectured reading (φ@ονεῖτε for φονεύετε) is correct. The case for that reading is weak, if one is not unwilling to accept the principle of "the more difficult reading." The consensus of modern translations and Greek versions has been to accept φονεύετε.

hard to think of James needing to warn them against murder; and if they were of such a murderous temperament it is likewise difficult to understand such a mild, brotherly approach.

The most probable solution is also the one which is appropriate to our present purpose: the comparison of the statement in James with the Gospel of Matthew. It was Jesus who re-defined the evil of continuing resentment as equivalent to murder (Matthew 5:21ff.). Kittel says:

In the word of Jesus, indeed, Matthew 5:21ff, the commentary and inner significance of the "murder commandment" is given; that is his "But I say to you": on the murder commandment in actuality means on the one hand avoidance of the transgression of the command to love and on the other hand the demand of the attitude of love. But with this we obtain precisely the sense which our approach to the dependency of James demands. The command of love is the one, the royal, chief commandment; whoever keeps the sixth commandment, but transgresses the fifth--that is, the fifth commandment in whose interpretation the love commandment has been established as the central command--that person is guilty of the whole law. *φονεύεις* is, so to speak, set in quotation marks: "If you murder"--namely, if you do the thing which the Lord has called "murder."¹

Kittel's summary may help to explain the reason James mentions only these two commandments of the ten: namely, because he was familiar with the tradition of Jesus-words, in a form similar to that employed by Matthew and he concerned himself with the contrast involved with these two.²

¹Kittel, "Der Geschichtliche Ort . . . ," p. 87. (We must allow for the traditional Catholic-Lutheran numbering of the commandments in the Decalogue.)

²This reasoning does not explain, however, why James does not appear to consider the "inner" significance of the commandment concerning adultery. If Kittel's approach is correct then we must merely hold the question as un-

In any case, there are evident similarities between the two passages which may be accounted for from the standpoint of the internalization of the murder-commandment; and it is difficult to rationalize the statement as it appears in James by any other explanation.

By the same token, the statement in James 4:1f. (which is difficult at best) appears to be related closely to 2:11. The verses which begin chapter four speak of "wars" and "fightings" among you. "You desire and do not have; so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war." It is scarcely likely, in the complete absence of any textual evidence, that the right approach to the problem is to conjecture on a copyist's error ($\phi\theta\upsilon\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ inserted for $\phi\theta\upsilon\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$),¹ though "envy" is certainly more palatable than "kill." The fact is that the reading which stands in the text supports the statement in 2:11, and the statement in 2:11 supports this reading. They should stand or fall together--and they should bear a similar interpretation. The naked suggestion in 2:11, "if you . . . do kill," is amplified in 4:2, as if James were saying plainly, "your coveting and desiring--indeed your whole approach to pleasure--divides you and causes you to transgress the fifth commandment as the Lord interpreted it."

answerable for lack of any evidence. It is not supposed, of course, that Matthew was, in his composition of the gospel, limited to use of sources equivalent to the material in the Epistle of James.

²This conjecture has a venerable history, dating from Erasmus, and is supported by a number of modern commentators. Cf. Mitton, op. cit., p. 149.

James 2:13

ἡ γὰρ κρίσις ἀνέλεος
τῷ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος·
κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος
κρίσεως

(James 2:13)

For judgment is without
mercy to one who has
shown no mercy; yet mercy
triumphs over judgment.

Matthew 5:7

μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες,
ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.

(Matthew 5:7)

Blessed are the merciful
for they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 6:14, 15

For if you forgive men their
trespasses, your heavenly
Father also will forgive
you. But if you do not
forgive men their tres-
passes, neither will your
Father forgive your tres-
passes.

(Matthew 9:13, 12:7)

"I desire mercy and not
sacrifice." (Matthew 18:33)
". . . and should you not
have had mercy on your
fellow servant, as I had
mercy on you?"

The Gospel of Matthew repeats the refrains of mercy,
acts of mercy, forgiveness, and the relationship of each

of these to judgment. James, likewise, in several contexts, works with similar ideas. The plain statement in James 2:13 has the marks of an aphoristic oral summary, in this way too, similar to several of the above Matthean statements. Windisch, among others, points out that this emphasis is not only evangelical, but also from prior Jewish thought.¹ It is common, as well, throughout the New Testament. James, however, takes occasion on the subject of mercy to speak of the conditions of God's wrath. "Judgment is without mercy" under certain non-uncommon conditions. On the other hand, and to keep the needed perspective we are reminded that "mercy triumphs over judgment." Without mention of God, James has declared to the reader a fundamental fact of God's expression to men. This is the picture expressed by Jesus in the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-35), and in the Sermon on the Mount--in the fifth beatitude and in the 'forgiveness' petition of the Lord's prayer.

Mitton entertains the thought that the present passage in James may be a direct reflection of the beatitude on mercy. He says:

Yet it would not be improper for James here, in his own way, to enforce what he understands to be the meaning of the Lord's beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."²

While it may be going a bit too far to suppose that

¹Hans Windisch, Die Katholischen Briefe, 3 Auflage, H. Preisker (Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1951), p. 16.

²Mitton, op. cit.

James had the words of the beatitude in mind when his word on mercy was written, it may not be an exaggerated claim to say that the tradition--oral or written--of Jesus' words lies in the background.¹ That is to say, in the light of the great frequency of this theme, the general tenor of Jesus' words came to mind in light of the larger context, which was discrimination on the basis of status; and in light of the narrower context, keeping the law--which for James centered itself in the law of love.

Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons
of God.

μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί,
ὅτι υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.

James 3:18

And the harvest of righteousness
is sown in peace
by those who make peace.

καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν
εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς
ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην.

It is God who is the "maker of peace" in Ephesians 2:15, II Maccabees 1:4, and III Maccabees 2:20. Here in two passages peace is made (or worked) by men. Peace, in normal New Testament terms,² has three basic connotations: first, the state of things as they should be, or appro-

¹Cf. Supra, p. 251.

²This is distinct from the O.T. Shalom, which carried the flavor of "prosperity" or "well-being" (cf. II Samuel 11:7, in which David inquired of Uriah whether there was shalom with the war) as its most prominent connotation. Cf. in this connection Von Rad "εἰρήνη," TDNT, II, pp. 402-406.

priateness; second, the concept of reconciliation;¹ and third, "peace as the salvation of the whole man in an ultimate eschatological sense."²

Men, even the best of them, are not competent to make peace in this third sense. However, a man committed to "the salvation of the whole man" is capable of effecting a great amount of good in the direction of reconciliation--especially reconciliation of men with God (II Cor. 5:18-20).

Both passages which emphasize making peace follow in context the mention of those who are specially motivated: the pure in heart (Matthew); and those who have the wisdom from above (James) which expresses itself as "pure, the peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity."³

In both passages there is one further, albeit relatively minor, similarity. Both of the statements about making peace include a promise. In the case of the Matthean statement, "they shall be called sons of God;" in James, they participate in the production of "the harvest of righteousness." It is they, too, who enjoy the fruit of

¹Cf. Foerster, "εἰρήνη," TDNT, II. pp. 411f., in which Foerster speaks of the second conception as "reconciliation with God." This is not always so, for reconciliation also is seen as the breaking down of the wall of division--between those who were near and those who were far off (cf. Ephesians 2:14, 15; 4:3).

²Ibid.

³The coincidence of the pure in heart and the "wisdom . . . which is first pure . . ." is the result of the accident of English translation, for the words in Greek are καθαρός and ἁγνός.

the harvest. The N.E.B. translates: "True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace." Similarly, the New International Version renders: "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."¹ The major variable in translation of this verse is the problem of whether to take the genitive, righteousness/justice, as a subjective genitive (=the fruit which is righteousness) or as an objective genitive, (=the fruit which produces righteousness). The former seems to me preferable, in keeping with the tenor of the context,² especially of v. 17. καρπός is properly translated as fruit or as harvest. The thought of the verse demands the supply of a word such as "seed," for one sows neither the fruit nor the harvest. Modern translations have variously rendered the sentence with its subject as fruit; harvest; seed; justice; the wise; or peacemakers. But for our present purpose the essence of the verse remains the same. Only in three N.T. passages is there any reference to "peacemaking"; and only in James and Matthew is it suggested that peacemaking is an undertaking within the capacity of mankind. This then is another close link between the two books, and seems to point to a unique form of the tradition of Jesus' words which stands behind

¹The Holy Bible: New International Version. The New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1973), p. 503.

²Cf. James Anderson, The Epistle of James: The New International Commentary on the New Testament, F. F. Bruce, General ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 156f., for a brief resumé of the problems in translation and interpretation of this verse.

both documents.

Matthew 12:39

γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς
σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ.

James 4:4

μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι
ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου
ἐχθρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν;

A further linking of the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew may be indicated--in general, if not in detail--that both documents speak of a form of unfaithfulness (or faithlessness, which may be a more accurate description of the Matthean denunciation) with the use of the feminine form, "adulteress." The term is rare in the New Testament, being found seven times in all: three of these occurrences are in Matthew (12:39, 16:4) and James (4:4). One of the occurrences is in Mark 8:38, a verse not paralleled by Matthew (and in a phrase not paralleled by Luke).¹ It is important to recall that the term is found at least seven times in the LXX,² and that related terms are not infrequent in Old Testament thought.³

It is the relative infrequency of μοιχαλὶς in the New Testament which makes this comparison in Matthew and

¹Twice, the term is used by Paul in Romans 7, used in the non-figurative sense of a woman who would be an adulteress under certain circumstances. The remaining N.T. use is II Peter 2:14, in a context which has some marks of non-figurative use.

²Proverbs 18:22, Ezekiel 16:38, Ezekiel 23:45, Hosea 3:1, and Malachi 3:5 are noteworthy among them.

³Cf. especially Hosea 9:1. The concept of Israel as "bride" or "wife" is important also to this thought (Deut. 31:16; Isaiah 54:6; Jeremiah 3:20).

James stand out in sharper relief. The grammatical construction is not close: certainly not close enough to suggest (on the basis of this comparison alone) that either James or Matthew necessarily had access to the words written by the other. On the other hand, however, this is one further illustration of the compatibility of the thought of the two writers. Likewise it is a further indication of just how close James stands to the tradition of the words of Jesus. This metaphorical use of the feminine form (if II Peter 2:14 is literal, as it appears to be, rather than metaphorical) is found three times in the Gospels, once in James, and nowhere else in N.T. epistolary material.

Matthew 23:12

James 4:10

Whoever exalts himself will	Humble yourselves before
be humbled, and whoever hum-	the Lord and he will
bles himself will be exalted.	exalt you.

ὅστις δὲ ὑψώσει ἑαυτόν	ταπεινώθητε ἐνώπιον
ταπεινωθήσεται, καὶ ὅστις	κυρίου, καὶ ὑψώσει ὑμᾶς.
ταπεινώσει ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται	

The antithetical thought behind this saying is not otherwise unknown in the New Testament--or in the Old.¹ Words quite like these appear in Luke (14:11 and 18:14): in quite different contexts, to be sure, but with the same general meaning. James, as well, had a very similar

¹Cf. Job 22:29; Proverbs 29:23; Philippians 2:8, 9; and I Peter 5:6.

thought in 1:9f.: "Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation," and again in 4:6, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."¹

This verse in James is notably brief and concise. It has the flavor of an aphorism, or a type which Jesus may have used on numerous occasions in summing up important truths. It may even be the last half of a saying in antithetical parallelism which could have run:

"Exalt yourselves in the sight of God
and he will humble you;
Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will exalt you."

The setting of the comparable saying in Matthew's twenty-third chapter, immediately before the seven woes to the Scribes and Pharisees, is in an address "to the crowds and to his disciples." He cautions against one's seeking to honor, even to the point of titles such as "rabbi," "father," and "master" (καθηγητής, "teacher"). All of this naturally would speak to the situation of the primitive church, to which Matthew wrote and in which those who had been closest to Jesus² would be tempted to step into the place of honor which they themselves had earlier accorded Jesus. In fact such an attitude would be presumption on at least two counts: first, because in the brotherhood no one was to consider himself above another;

¹Proverbs 3:34 (LXX). Cf. I Peter 5:5, 6.

²Albright and Mann, *op. cit.*, p. 279, say that verses 7-11 illustrate their claim that Matthew's Gospel contains a "considerable amount of private teaching addressed to the inner circle of disciples."

and second, because their post-Easter experience was always to remember that Jesus was not absent,¹ and therefore the position of leader ("rabbi"; "master") was not open.

It is to quite a different situation that James speaks, but one in which the same aphorism is appropriate. The situation is "friendship with the world," which is enmity with God (4:4), and a proud lack of submission to God (4:6,7). These are circumstances conceivable in a local church, which are quite similar in spirit to the problem faced in Matthew's parallel.

In the two comparable passages we see the use of both the verb ὀψώ (in fact, once in Matthew it appears in a different function, but in a form identical to that in James) and the verb ταπεινώ.²

James 4:11f.

Matthew 7:1

He that speaks evil against	Judge not, that you be not
a brother or judges his	judged. For with the
brother, speaks evil against	judgment you pronounce you
the law and judges the law.	will be judged.
But if you judge the law, you	
are not a doer of the law but	
a judge. There is one law-	

¹Matthew 28:20.

²The same observation may be made about the two Lucan references. It is possible, although doubtful, that this is a Q saying and that this is one of James' few parallels with the Q source. The Lucan references are both found in different contexts from that of Matthew, as a pronouncement of sorts at the close of parables on humility. They are as close to James 4:10 as is Matthew 23:12.

giver and judge, he who is
 able to save and to destroy.
 But who are you that you
 judge your neighbor?

A serious look at the nature of God lies behind both of these warnings against judging. The approach taken by Matthew is the same as that found in his previous chapter (6:12, 14f.), that God may be expected to take the same sort of approach toward one as that one takes toward another. Ultimately, it is the same concept which says, "if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," and "with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged."¹

The thought of James is somewhat broader, more developed, and more comprehensive. He equates (or, more properly, aligns) speaking evil against a brother with speaking evil against the law; and judging a brother with judging the law. Dibelius reminds us that "the warning against slander and calumny appears in a number of early-Christian lists of vices. . . ." "Slander is an offense, not merely against one commandment, but against the entire authority of the law, and thus against God."²

In fact, it is not the ten commandments to which James limits his thought: he has already expressed himself on

¹Cf. also Luke 6:37ff., where the injunction against judging is combined in the same verse with the statement, "forgive, and you will be forgiven."

²Dibelius, Der Brief des Jakobus, p. 272f.

that issue. He is concerned that his readers understand the law not merely as a series of commands and prohibitions, but that it is one law. "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (2:10). And the law is the simple principle: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (2:8). Bearing this in mind, then, James insists that to judge a brother, or to speak evil of him, is to declare the law of love invalid and unworthy.¹

No one has the right to make such an approach to the law; for there is only one lawgiver, and it is he who also judges. It is he who is able to save and to destroy. The inference must be made that for a man to judge his neighbor is for him to incur similar judgment from God. Thus, though James has an expanded form of the saying, the reasoning here and in the Gospel account is essentially the same.²

Matthew 6:19, 20

James 5:2, 3

<p>"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes</p>	<p>"Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth- eaten. Your gold and sil- ver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You</p>
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¹Ibid., Cf. also our earlier discussion on "Law" in James, supra, pp. 140ff.

²Cf. F. Buchsel, "κρίνω," TDNT, III, p. 939.

and where thieves do not
break in and steal."

have laid up treasure for
the last days."

Matthew 6:19, 20

μὴ θησαυρίζετε . . . ἐπὶ
τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σῆς καὶ βρῶσις
ἀφανίζει . . .

James 5:2, 3

ὁ πλοῦτος ὑμῶν σέσηπεν
καὶ τὰ ἱμάτια ὑμῶν
σητόβρωτα γέγονεν.
. . . ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν
ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις . . .
ἐτρουφήσατε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. . . .

The natural corruption of natural treasures is the subject of these passages. James speaks to those who are already wealthy, while the passage in Matthew cautions against seeking to gain wealth. The two passages have a curious similarity in reference to wealth. Matthew refers to moth and "rust"¹ and their ability to consume goods. James, likewise, speaks of moth and corrosion, and the decay which has happened to goods.² Both speak of laying up treasure, using the verb forms θησαυρίζετε and ἐθησαυρίσατε. This verb is found five times in the New Testament in addition to these, and in none of these is its use closely related to the ones at hand, nor is it

¹The far better translation would be "corrosion," when speaking of silver and gold.

²In the case of James, the more explicit term ζος is used for corrosion, possibly because he wishes to make other use of that term later in the same sentence: "their rust (=poison) will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire." James, however, does employ the root of βρώσις in his term σητόβρωτα (moth-eaten). Luke's parallel to Matthew 6:19, 20 speaks of the dangers of thief and moth, but omits reference to corrosion or rust.

found in a passage which makes reference to rot, rust, or moth. The fact that these expressions are limited to James and Matthew further confirms the connection between the two.

In addition it must be pointed out that both passages point beyond earthly wealth to the possibility of a heavenly wealth. Both passages make pointed reference to what has happened, or might have happened, upon the earth--ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς--as though another realm altogether ought to be the goal (as, indeed, Matthew's Gospel says clearly).

Matthew 24:33 (=Mark 13:29)

James 5:9

So, also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates.

Do not grumble, brethren against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the doors.

Matthew 24:33

James 5:9

γινώσκετε ὅτι

. . . ἰδοὺ ὁ κριτὴς

ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις

πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν ἑστηκεν.

Here, in passages framed in apocalyptic thought, is quite a direct statement by both James and Matthew that the Judgment is at hand. James is somewhat more specific, in his indication that it is "the Judge" who is before the doors, because of his immediate context ("do not grumble . . . against one another, that you may not be judged"); while Matthew's context speaks of the Day of God with less emphasis in the immediate context on personal judg-

ment.

I have already considered, in the chapter on eschatology, some of the implications of the thought involved in these passages. It therefore remains merely to indicate that the words of James are here parallel to Mark as well as Matthew (it is interesting to note that Luke has changed the reading to ". . . you know that the Kingdom of God is near.").

James 2:4

. . . "Have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"

Matthew 15:19

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts . . ."

(διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν).

(διαλόγισμοι πονηροί).

The verbal form, διαλογίζομαι, and the noun-form διαλογισμός, each appear in the New Testament some fifteen times. In no other occurrence does either form of this word-root appear in combination with the word πονηρός. The same may be said for all of the occurrences of these words in the LXX.¹ It seems exceedingly unlikely, therefore, that both James and Matthew would just chance upon this combination of words unless one of several possibilities contributed to the thought: either (1) both James and Matthew had contact with words like these in the same

¹In one LXX reference, Isaiah 59:7, the word πονηρίαν occurs in the same verse, but not in connection with either of the verse's uses of διαλογισμός.

milieu of early Christianity, and at roughly the same time; or (2) both writers were familiar with the same tradition of the words of Jesus, and used those words in quite similar phrasing and meaning, though in very different connections; or (3) one may have had the written document of the other.

James 2:14-16

"What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?"

Matthew 25:41-43, 46

"Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, . . . naked and you did not clothe me. . . .' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

In these passages the point of one's salvation appears to be the main point involved. Both James and Matthew are writing of the works of mercy which are the working expression of the law, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." For Matthew, the neglect of such works of mercy seems, in this passage at any rate, to be sufficient grounds to send one away into eternal punishment. James deals with the same sort of neglect with rhetorical

questions: "what does it profit?" (verse 14). "Can his faith save him?" (verse 14). "What does it profit? (verse 16). We might make the assumption that one needs to be saved, and that this salvation is regarded as profit ($\delta\phi\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, benefit). The absence of this profit or benefit, then, we may suppose, is lack of salvation.

A careful exegesis of these two texts would reveal a less legalistic approach than is evident on the surface. For example, the words quoted above from Matthew are part of a parable. It is important to understand the parable as a whole, and not to press too much significance into its individual words and phrases. In the passage quoted from James there may be a clue to the meaning in the shift from second person ("my brethren") to third person ("a man," "his faith") and back to second person ("one of you"). The nature of parenetic material enters in, and may also be a clue to the significance of the passage, as well as the relationship of these acts of mercy to the law of love.

In sum, however, it is our purpose to point out that both passages have the implied message that in judgment the acts of mercy--specifically feeding the hungry and clothing the naked--are to be considered highly important criteria.

In this chapter we have considered a series of passages which have parallels between the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle of James. In some of them the parallel has been based upon a mere echo of the language, in cer-

tain uncommon combinations of words. In others, the underlying thought or philosophy of the two writers has been the key factor. In still other cases, the similarities have been a close verbal and conceptual correspondence. The degree of the connection between the two works is the more pronounced where the points of similarity are in areas in which other New Testament witnesses do not correspond similarly: Matthew and James are unique in many of these similarities. Further, the correspondence is more significant because of the brevity of the Epistle of James--only 108 verses.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSION

FINAL CONSIDERATION AND CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this study to compare certain theological and literary similarities which may be noted between the Epistle of James and the Gospel according to Matthew. A number of commentators have pointed out some of these similarities: especially, as we have noted earlier, Davies, Schlatter, G. Kittel, and Mayor. But there is no agreement among interpreters concerning how to account for the similarities. Dibelius, who makes little of the similarities, says, "Dass Jak aber eines unserer Evangelien benutzt habe, lässt sich nicht beweisen."¹ In his commentary he emphasizes the contrasts rather than the similarities of the very passages which provide closest parallels to the Gospels. Other commentators conclude that the similarities are quite strong, and allow that they may be explained best through a similarity of milieu and of tradition behind the two documents.² One writer suggests that James was written from a didactic tradition in Hellenistic Judaism, but drawing from the Gospel of Matthew "support . . .

¹Dibelius, Der Brief des Jakobus, p. 46. Cf. also pp. 47, 177, 262.

²Schlatter, e.g. says, "Es lässt sich keine abgrenzung gegen das erreichen, was durch den einheitlichen sprachlichen Typus und durch die gemeinsame überlieferung entstehen konnte" (Der Brief des Jakobus, p. 19). Cf. also Davies, who says, "in the milieu from which James drew its materials, the words of Jesus were in the air" (Setting of the Sermon on the Mount., p. 404).

for the presentation of his themes" and for "such theological depth as he has."¹ His suggestion is that the writer of James did not have a written copy of Matthew, but that it "was known to him from hearing it read in his Church."² This theory presumes, of course, a late date for James, in the last few years of the first century or the first few years of the second century, A.D.

The present work as well, recognizes a remarkable similarity on a large number of points between the Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew. However, it seems quite unlikely that the comparison can be adequately explained by the suggestion that the writer of James heard Matthew read, and even less that he had access to a copy of Matthew, in view of the fact that the greater number of the points of comparison do not occur between James and Matthew's material indiscriminately, but between James and Matthew's unique material--either that normally designated the "M-source," or Matthew's additions to, or redaction of, Q or Marcan material. Of the twenty-one separate Matthean passages to which we referred in the preceding chapter, only three were paralleled in Marcan sources, and six had parallels in Luke. Of the twelve which have Matthean parallels exclusively, eight are from Matthew's special material with no synoptic parallels, and the remaining four fall into a special category, in which the Matthean passage itself has a Lucan parallel, but the

¹Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. "The Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew," The Authorship and Integrity of the New Testament: Theological Collections 4 (London: SPCK, 1965), p. 107.

²Ibid.

specific comparison with James is not found in Luke. An example of this is the parallel of *μοιχαλίδες* in James 4:4 with the *μοιχαλῖς* generation in Matthew 12:39. The Lucan parallel to Matthew omits the very phrase which is parallel to James: so that while Matthew is parallel to both Luke and James in this passage, Luke and James are not parallel to each other. Other examples of this phenomenon are James 1:4 - Matthew 5:48 (Luke 6:36), and James 1:17 - Matthew 7:11 (Luke 11:13).

Mayor's list of comparisons between James and the synoptic Gospels includes three parallels with Mark, eleven with Luke, and, significantly, fifty-seven with Matthew.¹ Though some of Mayor's parallels are tenuous, one may sense a proportion of the comparisons from his listing. Similarly, the ratio in Schlatter's enumeration of parallels between James and the synoptics is 3, 8, and, 32 in Mark, Luke, and Matthew, respectively.²

Accordingly the distinct possibility arises that perhaps most of the points at issue are not so much similarities between James and Matthew as between James and only one of Matthew's sources: i.e., "M." Otherwise, if the writer of James heard Matthew "read in his church," for example, one would expect to see similarities between the Epistle of James and all parts of Matthew--in some broad measure, at least, if not equal proportion. But this is not the case, as examination of the listings in Schlatter

¹Mayor, James, pp. lxxxv ff.

²Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 19ff.

or Mayor will show.¹

Is it possible, therefore, that there is a closer relationship between our two documents--the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle of James--in their origin than commentators have suggested? Our examination of the evidence for the date of James shows that the reasons to suppose that James was written after A.D. 80 are less than compelling. To the contrary, Mitton has recently argued for a date around A.D. 62;² and Kittel goes so far as to commend a date of writing before A.D. 48.³ With the recent attestations of early date, can the case for late dating be so formidable after all? In fact, that case rests mainly on one pillar: the thought that James 2:14ff., must have been written against the backdrop of what Paul wrote concerning faith and works. As we have seen, that pillar is not so sturdy as it has sometimes seemed. As Shepherd says, "Critics . . . disagree considerably as to whether the author of the Epistle intended to combat, correct, or supplement the Pauline teaching regarding the relation of faith and works."⁴ Kittel is out on his own in suggesting that James wrote to correct misrepresentations of Paul's teaching in an oral stage while Paul was preaching of faith and works but before his doctrine has

¹Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 54f. and Mayor, James, p. xiv.

²Mitton, James, pp. 8ff.

³Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort . . . ," pp. 98ff.

⁴Shepherd, art. cit., p. 99.

appeared in written form.¹ Whereas one can account for a very early production for James in this way, "a middle or a late composition, whether in the later apostolic time or in the second century, leads to weighty difficulties."²

Further, Kittel concludes:

es gibt nichts, was gegen eine Frühabfassung kurz vor der Ersten Missionsreise, und zwar durch den Herrnbruder Jakobus, spräche, wohl aber bietet diese Annahme die einzige geschichtliche Möglichkeit, innerhalb der Apostolischen und Nachapostolischen Zeit den Zusammenhang von Jac 2:14ff., sach- und textgemäss und ohne Gewalttätigkeit zu erklären.³

Thus the passage 2:14ff, far from demanding a late date, is declared to be in support of the earliest.

Even the relative silence in the Church for centuries about the Epistle of James, often considered to be both puzzling and also a major supporting argument for a late date, is not a telling argument against early composition. The term "relative" must be used, for critics have seen connections with James in other early works.⁴ Moffatt's judgment is that it is "more than probable" that Hermas knew the epistle;⁵ and others (e.g. Mayor) have seen al-

¹Kittel, art. cit., pp. 94ff.

²Ibid., p. 104.

³Ibid.

⁴Cf. The NT in the Apostolic Fathers, loc cit.

⁵Cf. Moffatt, The General Epistles, p. 1, and Moffatt, I.L.N.T., p. 467. He cites "the repeated collocations of the divine πνεῦμα with κατέκλυσεν (4:5 = Mand. iii. I, Sim. v. 6. 5-7 . . .), of δαψυχία with prayers (I 4-8 = Mand. xii I. 1-2); 4:7 = Mand. xii. 2.4, 4.7, 5.2; 4:8 = Vis. iii. 2.2, and a number of minor resemblances like those of 1:8 = Mand. v. 2.7; 2:5 + 5:16 = Sim. ii. 5; 2:7 + 5:2 = Sim. viii. 6.4 . . . etc. These data indicate not simply a common atmosphere (Ropes), much less the dependence of Jas. on Hermas (Pfleiderer), but a strong probability that

lusions to it in the First Epistle of Clement (ca. 95), while Schlatter believes that it was a source for the composition of I Peter.¹ One explanation for the relative silence concerning James in the early centuries of the Christian era is advanced by Sparks:

The fact that the Epistle is a Jewish-Christian document, whoever wrote it, may have been in itself sufficient to discredit it in the eyes of Gentile Christians; while its essentially practical attitude would inevitably make it seem of little consequence to those whose main interests were theological. Accordingly, its neglect by the early Church is by no means an insuperable barrier to² accepting the Lord's brother as the author.

If the ideas in 2:14ff., as I suggest, do not demand a late-apostolic or second-century origin,³ the balance of probability swings over to an early date, i.e., some time in the period from A.D. 46 to 62. A number of arguments may be adduced to support the earlier portion of this time span: e.g. the primitive "tone" of the epistle; the lack of a developed Christology; the kinship with Old Testament prophetic writings, with Hellenistic writing styles as seen in Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach⁴ and with the Cynic-Stoic diatribe;⁵ the seemingly primitive church order and

Jas. . . . was known to the latter author." (I.L.N.T., p. 467). (The abbreviations are those used by Moffatt.)

¹Schlatter, Jakobus, pp. 67-73.

²H. F. D. Sparks, The Formation of the New Testament (London: SCM, 1952), p. 129.

³Cf. the fuller discussion of these ideas in the chapter on the origin of James, and in the chapter on Faith in James and Matthew, supra, pp. 39ff, 149ff.

⁴Cf. Shepherd, art. cit., p. 98.

⁵Ropes, James, pp. 10-17.

organization; and especially the close relationship between James and the words of Jesus. As Davies says, "It is in the Epistle of James that the words of Jesus break through more often than in any other document outside the Synoptics."¹

The hellenistic flavor in James may be attributed to the fact that it was written for Christians among the Jewish dispersion. If the author was a Jew reared in Galilee the degree of hellenism noticeable in his writing would as likely as not be greater than that in a Judean writer.

Though there is a degree to which it is Hellenistic,² the Epistle of James, it may be pointed out, stands close to Jewish prophetic and wisdom tradition: more so, in fact, than most New Testament writings. The unique blend of Hellenistic and Hebrew (wisdom-prophetic) characteristics corresponds with the possibility of a Northern-Palestinian author. As examples of James' affinity to the Old Testament prophetic genre, though it is clear that James is less poetic than the book of the prophet Joel, examination will show that it has something of the same tone. James has similarities to Amos 5:7-13, especially in James 5:1-9. In Zechariah subjects which are similar to those in James are treated: orphans, widows, and the

¹W. D. Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 402. This subject will be discussed further below.

²Cf. K. W. Clark, "Galilee," I.D.B., Vol. E-J, ed. by George Arthur Buttrick (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 344-345. Also cf. Sevenster, Do You Know Greek, passim. The Greek characteristics of James, especially in regard to the language, have been discussed in Chapter I.

poor (Zech. 7:9); truth, peace, and oaths (8:17); mourning (12:11); and in tone and sentiment the poignant phrase "they will look on the one whom they have pierced" (12:10), is akin to James 5:6, "You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you."

The closest similarities discernible in James with the Jewish tradition are probably with the prophecy of Malachi.¹

James is of course not unique among New Testament writers in having links with the Old Testament. But in a more complete measure than other writers he takes over the prophetic message as contemporary and relevant. It is almost as if he has no Haustafeln or other New Testament parenetic forms from which to draw,² and is left with the prophets and Jesus for his ethical structure.

Sidebottom writes of the primitive character of James

¹(1) Like James, Malachi utters warnings first to one group, then to another. (2) Both writers use dialogue-arguments, with the reply of an opponent brought to the fore, then the argument countering the reply. (3) Malachi warns those priests who teach, against causing others to stumble (2:8, cf. James 3:1f.). (4) Malachi warns of "the day of his coming." (3:2) (5) There are warnings against adulteresses and false oaths, and further mention of the wage-earner, the orphan, and the widow (all prominent subjects in James), all mentioned together in one verse of Malachi (3:5). Malachi further discusses (6) the problem of prosperity of the wicked (2:17); (7) the day of judgment (not, of course, uniquely: cf. Isa. 10:16f., 30:27; Zeph. 1:18, 3:8; Jer. 21:14, among others); (8) partiality in the law (ἐλαμβάνετε πρόσωπα, 2:9); (9) God as father and creator (2:10); and (10) God as unchangeable (3:6). For the last three in this list, cf. James 2:1 and 1:17f.

²This is not to deny the existence in James of similarities with other N.T. parenetic passages in his encouragement to rejoice in persecution (1:2, 3, 12ff.) or the comparison of good and evil, in the wisdom from above and earthly wisdom (in 3:13-17, comparable to the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:16-23).

thus:

That some of his features reappear in later works (Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas) does not destroy the impression of an almost pre-crucifixion discipleship. Not only is the person of Christ left out, his name only introduced at two points (where it could be omitted without damage to the sense), and no reference made to cross or resurrection or the events of the ministry, but his example is ignored, and his teaching left to stand by its own inherent value. The other place which the undeveloped theology of James recalls is the opening chapters of Acts.¹

Ropes does not himself hold to an early date for James; yet he appears to strengthen the case for an early date when he says:

. . . conspicuous is James' omission of some of the chief motives which have produced the Synoptic Gospels. Not only does he, like other early writers, but in a more complete measure than they, fail to use the traits of Jesus' life and character, even where they would have been particularly apt for reinforcement of moral and religious appeal, but the absence of the term Son of Man, and of the idea of the Kingdom of God . . . separate James from the Synoptic type . . . James was in religious ideas nearer to the men who collected the sayings of Jesus than to the authors of the Gospels, but his interests are not identical with those of either group.²

If kinship may be claimed to exist between James and the collectors of the sayings of Jesus, a key question is why James only has reflections of the sayings of Jesus, rather than direct quotations of his words (or passages which at least have the sound of direct quotations).³ The

¹Sidebottom, James, p. 14.

²Ropes, James, p. 39.

³David L. Dungan in his study, The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), has examined the problem of sayings of Jesus (in two specific subjects, concerning support for the apostles and

clues to an answer to this problem may lie in the observation of a principle which seems to have been observed by writers of epistles: i.e., direct quotation is somehow thought to be "out of bounds."¹

Additionally, the possibility still remains that James was written at a time so close to that of Jesus that the oral tradition from eyewitnesses was thought to be the only appropriate vehicle for what was thought to be the ipsissima verba Jesu: that to write the words themselves (at that stage in the development of the primitive church) would somehow detract from their impact as living revelation. It may have further been thought that "those who had been with Jesus" were the appropriate persons to guard and deliver the ipsissiam vox. Therefore, it may be suggested, the mes-

concerning divorce) as developed in the early church, and modified for use in Paul's teaching and in the synoptic Gospels. Dungan has limited his scope to these two specific cases presumably because of the scarcity of examples of explicit references to the words of Jesus, and particularly those which have discernible synoptic parallels. Among the results of his study Dungan writes, ". . . if Paul and the editors of the Synoptic gospels are compared. . . as to how the older traditional sayings of Jesus were to be interpreted and applied . . . they turn out to resemble each other almost perfectly." (Dungan, The Sayings of Jesus, p. 139). His point is not quite the same as ours, since he has in Paul those few attributed citations, but his analysis of Paul's epistolary use of the sayings of Jesus corresponds perfectly with our own observation of James.

¹Cf. our discussion of this problem in the chapter on literary genre supra, pp. 83-100. As was pointed out there, a complete analysis of ancient epistolary literature is not available. The present statement is made on the basis of the reading of several hundred letters and epistles from the collections of papyri and other available epistolary literature. Whereas in a gospel a saying gains its authority from its speaker (and thus not all sayings in a gospel are of equal authority), in an epistle all exhortation or parenesis comes through the writer (writing normally in his own name) and derives its authority from his own (cf. O.A. Piper, "Gospel (Message)," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, loc. cit.).

sage when written was given in summary only, and was given as a part of the writer's own message, rather than attributed to Jesus.

Selby lists five reasons why traditions about Jesus came to be collected in forms which developed into the four Gospels, namely (1) the expansion of the church into distant regions, which could not be reached readily with the tradition unless it were written. (2) The increasing proportion of Gentile Christians, who "had not been conditioned by the oral tradition as had the Jews." (3) The delay of the parousia. (4) Attrition of the number of those "who had been with Jesus," and thus who could speak authoritatively about the tradition. (5) The appearance of "heretical teachings and fanciful expressions."¹ It is apparent that reasons two, three, and five, are not involved in the production of the Epistle of James: although critics disagree as to the identity of "the twelve tribes," there is no indication that Gentiles are in view in James; the parousia is very much in the thought of James: "behold, the Judge is standing at the doors;" and if there is a heresy against which James writes, it is not readily discerned. The nearest one gets to mention of a heresy in James is in his strong insistence that "faith" which does not express itself in action is not faith, and deserves a decent burial. About Selby's reason number four in relation to James, nothing can be said. In any case, James

¹Donald J. Selby, Introduction to the New Testament: The Word Became Flesh (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 35.

has not the marks of lateness which these criteria of Selby's consider.

It may fairly be said in regard to date of composition for James that none of the foregoing arguments alone is conclusive. There is much we do not know about the first-century Church and its practices, policy, and its efforts to preserve its tradition. For similar reasons, there is a need for caution in proposing late dates which suggest periods of composition about which we know very little. On the other hand, the case for an early date for the writing of the Epistle of James is not negligible.

We have on earlier occasions referred to the phenomenon which may be observed in New Testament epistolary material, i.e., that there is great reluctance to represent direct quotation. John Pairman Brown has investigated one aspect of the problem concerning the production of New Testament Gospels and Epistles, and amplifies the concept that they are products with a common element:

what then is the connexion between an Epistle and a Gospel? . . . I suggest that they possess a literary unity: each can be thought of as built around a collection of Jesus' sayings as nucleus. Those sayings have undergone catechetical interpretation in all cases except (happily for the historian!) the Gospel of Luke.

In the Epistle the author turns that nucleus of sayings of Jesus into exhortation throughout. Usually he himself seems thereby to take credit for whatever fragments of ¹Jesus' own words have come through the process.

¹John Pairman Brown, "Synoptic Parallels in the Epistles and Form-History," New Testament Studies, 10 (1963), p. 48.

Dibelius has pointed out a similar phenomenon, that in parenetic documents of the Church the material of the sayings of Jesus is often freely used without express citation.¹ This observation must be tempered by the fact that the major parenetic documents which we have are Gospels (in which parenesis is normally included with express citation, contrary to Dibelius' observation) and Epistles (which not only do not generally quote Jesus, they hesitate in citing any source other than Scripture at all.).² Dibelius does not here account for the specific parenetic use of the Gospels. His point is valid in regard to the usage of epistolary material, and in that incidental way he has properly pointed to the fact that Epistles have a specialized usage, and a specialized approach to the

¹Martin Dibelius, A Commentary on the Epistle of James, ed. Heinrich Greeven and Helmut Koester, trans. Michael A. Williams (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976) [hereafter abbreviated James], pp. 28f.

²One further exception to this general statement concerns I John, which, it has been observed earlier, is not well described as an epistle, but rather a tract or a short treatise. It, in fact, does make such citation: "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you," (I John 1:5). Even such quotations as that in 2:4 (He who says, "I know him." . . .), are rare in the Epistles. The epistolary exceptions in I Cor. 7 (verses 6, 10, 12, and 25) 11:24f., II Cor. 10:10 and 12:9 are noteworthy for the fact that they are isolated exceptions. They are mentioned in chapter three, which discusses genre.

Further qualifying the statement about parenetic documents in general, a passing note must be made about the parenetic use of the apocalyptic genre. Apocalyptic, as found in Rev. or in Mark 13, can also be a cover for parenesis. In Mark 13 (and parallels) sayings of Jesus are interfused with developed Church-parenesis. In the Book of Revelation some sayings are sayings of the Risen Lord. Brief mention for the purpose of recognition of another N.T. parenetic element must be made, although the subject is not central to our discussion.

tradition of sayings of Jesus. Dibelius speaks of a three-fold similarity between James and the sayings of Jesus: first, there is "a purely formal similarity," in that the parenesis of James is made up of sayings, and the words of Jesus were collected in the same way. "Thus, these collections of sayings which are incorporated into the Gospels of Matthew and Luke have the same literary character as, for example, Jas. 1 and 5." Secondly, Dibelius points to a similarity of style, reminiscent of the language of Jesus; and a third similarity is in the message itself:

the Gospels and Jas. share the same general convictions. In both places we breath [sic] the atmosphere of an ethical rigorism whose pithy injunctions warn against the world and a worldly attitude,¹ and exhort to peace, meekness and humility.

To reiterate our frequent point: there are in the Epistle of James parallels to the teachings of Jesus. Most of these parallels are found only in Matthew, and specifically in material often designated "M" or in Matthean redaction of his sources.² Referring again to the words of Davies, we concur that:

the cumulative effect of the parallels is impressive. James has clearly drawn upon a tradition of the sayings of Jesus for his paraenetic purposes. It is significant in the light of our insistence that Q was not primarily catechetically or paraenetically oriented, that the parallels between James and Q are very few. . . . It is not necessary to assume that James has drawn upon the written

¹Dibelius, James, p. 28.

²See below, p. 295.

Gospels as such.¹

The thesis which I propose in conclusion is this: the author of this epistle, writing at some time between A.D. 45 and 62, was conversant with a tradition of the sayings of Jesus which he believed to be accurate and authentic. He incorporated a number of these sayings throughout the epistle, expanding them with allusions to the teachings pertinent to him and his readers, especially accentuating several key concepts: the validity of the law of love; the necessity for a living faith; and of one reason for right behavior, i.e., the impending eschatological judgment, with God as the judge.

The tradition of sayings upon which James drew may or may not have been widespread enough that the Lord's words were readily recognized as such by the readers, but the same tradition was recognized by at least the writer of Matthew and accredited by him when he produced his Gospel account. He at that time interwove Mark, Q,² and his

¹Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 403f.

²Any overlapping between James and Q may be examples of an incidental double tradition, similar to examples of overlapping of Mark and Q. There are only six such parallels between James and Q: James 1:2 (+ 5:10f.) and Matt. 5:11f./Luke 6:22f., on joy in persecution; James 4:3 and Matt. 7:7/Luke 11:9 on asking; James 1:22 and Matt. 7:24, 26/Luke 6:47, 49; James 2:5 and Matt. 5:3/Luke 6:20 on the blessing of the poor; James 4:10 and Matt. 23:12/Luke 14:11 and 18:14, on the exaltation of the humble; James 4:11f. and Matt. 7:1/Luke 6:37, judge not. Five of the Q passages are in the Sermon on the Mount (four are included in Luke's sixth chapter, in the Sermon on the Plain), and all have the easily-quotable style of aphorisms. Cf. the discussion on oral versus written sources for the Matthew-Luke tradition in Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 50ff.

special source ("M"), which contained material rather closely parallel to the James-ethic and-theology, along with other (as yet unaccounted-for) sources.¹ By this thesis, then, James is parallel to material which was used by the Evangelist as one part of a complex M-source.

It is worthy of note that Kümmel, in speaking of Matthew's special material, rejects the concept of a written source M. "If we consider the form-critical and theological disparity of Matthew's special material, then its unity in written form before Matthew cannot in any way be made intelligible. . . . Thus the most probable hypothesis is that Matthew, besides Mark and Q, used only oral tradition."² The "disparity," or lack of unity, is obvious: but it may be explained by postulating a complex series of sources for Matthew's special material, along with the composer's own interaction with these sources. Our suggestion is repeated here: that the Epistle of James was, in style and thought, close to one of those sources, and that Matthew molded, in style and vocabulary, what he found there, for his own purposes.³

Matthew does not give apparent attribution to this source just as he does not make explicit citation of Mark or Q, but it is evident that he trusted the source as genuine.

¹Among these are the difficult pericopes on the coin in the fish's mouth, Pilate's wife's dream, and others.

²Feine-Behm-Kümmel, INT, pp. 77f.

³See below pp. 296-298.

One illustration of how Matthew and James may have used the same tradition is seen in the example of the warning against oaths.

"But above all, my brethren	(Matthew gives the saying
(This is James' advisory	in the Antitheses.)
introduction, and contains	
indication of its great	
importance in the words	
"above all.")	

do not swear,
either by heaven

or by the earth

or with any other oath

but let your
yes be yes and your no
be no
that you may not
fall under condemnation.

Do not swear/at all,
either by heaven,/for it
is the throne of God,
or by the earth,/ for it is
his footstool,

(Matthew gives examples of
"any other oath")

or by Jerusalem, for it is
the city of the great King
And do not swear by your
head, for you cannot make
one hair white or black,

Let what you say
by Yes, yes; no, no;

anything more than this
comes from evil.¹

¹Portions unique to each writer are underlined merely to indicate the distinctive development.

James gives a kernel saying; while Matthew allows it to be a saying with greater balance and form, and a rhythm which it does not have in James.¹ The significance has changed slightly, because of the shift in the conclusion: the focus in Matthew is not on avoiding condemnation (note James' typical emphasis on the judgment), but on avoiding the influences of evil. Matthew's saying is expanded at logical expansion-points; and at the point at which James generalizes ("or with any other oath"), Matthew's saying gives two other interpretive examples ("Jerusalem," and "your head," with reasons expressed).² Beare says of the Matthean saying, "this material belongs to Matthew's Palestinian (Jewish-Christian) source."³

Let it suffice to give one further example of how Matthew develops and expands the material which we find in obviously compressed form in James. At the close of his discussion on Wisdom, (3:18), James says: "And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace," (καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπείρεται τοῖς ποιοῦσιν εἰρήνην). The verse in James has his typical

¹The Semitic flavor of the saying in Matthew, and its poetic balance, are conceded to be indications of its primitive nature. Yet this is not to say that what we have here is necessarily a form of ipsissima verba Jesu. Cf. Black, An Aramaic Approach, pp. 187f.

²Of this parallel Massey Shepherd says: "It is generally considered that this parallel presents the strongest single case for the dependence of James upon the gospel, despite the fact that James does not actually quote the Gospel and apparently reflects a more primitive tradition than the Gospel." (Shepherd, "The Epistle of James and the Gospel of Matthew," pp. 106, 107: emphasis ours.)

³Beare, The Earliest Records of Jesus, p. 60.

marks of catchword association with the previous verse (which itself uses the word εἰρηνική and the phrase καρπὼν ἀγαθῶν); and is artfully phrased.

Matthew, however, reports it as a saying of Jesus, with rhythm and phrasing, in a different poetic style, that of the Beatitude: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."¹

We are, at this point in our discussion, at the very heart of what Kümmel describes as the perennial task of modern New Testament study: the attempt at showing the unity--"persistent or variable," to use his words, behind the various forms included in the New Testament. In context, Kümmel says:

The unity of the New Testament message . . . cannot be presupposed as obvious on the basis of strictly historical research, and for the time being there is no other methodologically unobjectionable procedure than the scholarly analysis of every writing or stratum of tradition by itself. It is not to be doubted, however, that the attempt must be made by New Testament research to show the persistent or variable unity back of the multiplicity of forms once one affirms that to acknowledge the claim of this collection of writings on personal decision is an indispensable presupposition of a relevant understanding of the New Testament. Consequently New Testament research since its revitalization in the twenties of this century has had to² wrestle again and again with this problem.

However close Matthew may have been to the authentic tradition of the historical Jesus--or however far from

¹Cf. Black, loc. cit.

²Werner Georg Kümmel, The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems, trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 403f.

that tradition--he believed at least that the core materials which we find also to be incorporated in the Epistle of James, furthered his goal of presenting a portrait of Jesus. Practical matters which were James' concern often become matters of Matthew's concern as well. Theology in a manner similar to that expressed by James, especially in its view of who God is, also makes its appearance in Matthew, very often in heightened or amplified form. Matthew was not merely a scissors-and-paste editor, of course; this may be discerned readily by a brief encounter with a synopsis of the Gospels. Often he abbreviated material at his disposal, and at other times he expanded greatly. The abbreviated and suggestive style of wisdom-parenesis literature, as it is found in James, lends itself less to further abbreviation than to expansion and elucidation. Whereas Matthew shows little or no sign of having condensed this part of the common tradition, James has freely condensed and abbreviated it.

F. C. Grant writes that there were three major creative factors in the production of early Christian doctrine (and thus, we suggest by inference, of much of the New Testament literature). The first of the three was the Greek Old Testament.

. . . The other two were the tradition of Jesus' life and teaching, his death and resurrection; and the living, on-going experience of the Church itself as the Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided body of the Remnant, waiting for the Parousia and the Day of Judgment. These three sources provided a group of creative ideas which were poured at white heat into the matrix of Greek religious and philosophical language and thought during the first and

second centuries.¹

It is manifest that the Gospel of Matthew was a part of this process. Its quotations and reflections of the Greek Old Testament (apart from his use of the Hebrew) number well over one hundred.² Matthew includes materials and points of view which reflect the experience of the Church, emphasizing the expectation of the end-times and the Day of Judgment; further, the writer of the Gospel of Matthew has obviously collected portions and fragments of "the tradition of Jesus' life and teaching, his death and resurrection" from a variety of sources--most obviously from Mark and the Q sources, supplemented by other sources of the tradition which were at his disposal and which he felt were trustworthy or helpful in fulfilling his goals. Because Matthew's unique material has often been called by the single designation "M" it is also sometimes treated as if from a single source. Streeter's designation of M excluded a number of narratives unique to Matthew, and it excluded also the fulfilment-sayings.³ From the variety of forms alone--narrative and parable, miracle-story and parenetic material, among others--it is obvious that the M-source is complex and derived from a variety of contexts and situations.

¹F. C. Grant, Roman Hellenism and the New Testament (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), p. 111.

²Cf. Selby, Introduction to the N.T., p. 112.

³B. F. Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins (London: Macmillan & Co., 1924) passim. Cf. A. M. Hunter, The Work and Words of Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 147.

That Matthew retained control over the pericopes which he derived from his sources is most clearly seen in his use of Marcan material. But by the same token, the use which Matthew must have made of his contact with the tradition which was also used by James is not easily analyzed, but may in some measure be defined. Those portions which the evangelist may have thus derived from the source also used by the epistle were usually expanded and given prominence: often, in addition, they are poetic in form, whether that form was part of the tradition as received by Matthew or, perhaps partially developed by the writer.¹

We refer once more to W. D. Davies, who indicates that the cumulative effect of James-Matthew parallels is a strong and telling one. He concludes, rightly, I believe, that James has drawn upon a tradition of sayings of Jesus independent of the Gospels for his own teaching purposes.²

It is beyond debate that James is largely parenetic in nature. It is also epistolary in genre. In either of these cases, let alone this combination, the document could not be expected to make citation of words of a tradition of sayings of Jesus, if such words should be included.³

¹Cf. once again Black's suggestion that Matthew gave form and interpretation to some of these very passages: "Matthew's 'version' resembles nothing so much as a free literary paraphrase." (Black, An Aramaic Approach, p. 187).

²Davies, Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, p. 403f. The same thought is the conclusion of a number of contemporary interpreters (cf. Dibelius, James, p. 29).

³Cf. Dibelius, James, pp. 28f.

My suggestion implies that the Epistle of James contains similar material, in a not altogether dissimilar style, as one of the sources of M material.¹ Scholars are far from complete agreement that M was a single document, (or even that it was a written document at all). Selby writes, "the homogeneity of M also has been questioned."² Similarly, Kee, Young, and Froelich say:

In recognition of the divergence of scholarly opinion regarding sources, it is preferable to suppose that each author had access to several sources, perhaps, written and oral, from which he incorporated material into his gospel. This does not eliminate the possibility that among the sources, in the case of each author, there might have been one collection of traditions from which he drew heavily in writing his gospel. The symbols M and L have become convenient terms to designate the special material of Matthew and Luke rather than any specific theory about the character of the sources.³

The point is that the designation M may signify only Matthew's way of adding materials to his sources Mark and Q when he compiled his gospel. It may include some readily available written materials unused by the other synoptists, as well as common oral traditions and perhaps even both first-hand and second-hand eyewitness accounts. Albright

¹This may be another of the perplexing areas of N.T. study in which not enough evidence exists to resolve the problem, yet "the sources of Matthew's special material" is an area in which further work remains to be done.

²Selby, Introduction, p. 54.

³Howard Clark Kee, Franklin W. Young, and Karlfried Froelich, Understanding the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 81. Kümmel similarly says, of the "postulated source M": ". . . no one can form a judicious opinion of the literary character which this source was supposed to have had." INT, p. 78.

and Mann speak of Matthew containing "a very substantial amount of private teaching addressed to the inner circle of the disciples."¹ Thinking of M as a composite of several kinds of material in this way, it is not entirely out-of-place to consider Matthew and James as having used similar traditions of the sayings of Jesus, or perhaps the selfsame source, available within their milieu.

Aside from the actual verbal parallels to which we referred in the previous chapter, there are many similarities in subject-matter between James and Matthew. This is particularly true in the ethical stance of the two documents, as well as in the concern for what could be termed "attitudinal righteousness," in the prominence of the law concerning love of neighbor, in use of the term faith, and the thought of the Judgment of God, not to mention areas such as patient endurance of persecution, which James and Matthew share in common with much of the rest of the New Testament.

It is true also, as we have observed, that there appears to be a hesitancy, shared by both writers, to refer to the Holy Spirit. Although Matthew's Gospel has eleven such references, two of them refer to the Spirit-conception of Jesus, two appear in the baptism account, and two others refer to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Only two of the eleven references have to do with the disciples themselves, and both are in contexts of commission: it is "the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (when you are

¹Albright and Mann, Matthew, p. 279.

delivered up--10:20), and "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (28:19). We may tentatively suggest that the reason for such paucity of reference to the Holy Spirit--especially as regards the activity of believers--is that in the context of the James-Matthew milieu, the work of God is done not in a super-human manner, but simply by obedient people. For James, as we have seen, wisdom which is "from above" is quite nearly the same as Paul's fruit of the Spirit.

Both writers repeatedly refer to the coming of the Lord, coupled with emphasis on responsibility of believers, and on the concept of the Judgment of God. They are not unique in this among New Testament writers, but there is a certain distinctiveness in outlook. The expectation of the parousia is not dim and waning: it is alive and vivid. The Judge "is at the door." (Matt. 24:33; James 5:9). The personal responsibility which this knowledge places upon the believers is especially keen, and it becomes part of the ethical motif, woven into the warp and woof of the two documents.

As we have seen in earlier pages, the ethic of James and that of Matthew are remarkably similar. This phenomenon may be attributed to one of several possibilities.

(1) The likelihood is strong that James and Matthew were produced in the same general Jewish-Christian milieu,¹

¹The statement is true in spite of the startling differences in style and tone. James, writing to "the twelve tribes of the dispersion, i.e., Jews (or Gentiles?) who were part of the Hellenistic world and who might be expected to respond to Hellenistic forms of argument, writes in a style similar to that of the Hellenistic Stoic dia-

though some years apart. (2) If our general thesis is correct that the Epistle of James precedes Matthew's Gospel in time, then similarity of ethical and moral outlook may even have derived, at least in part, from an awareness on the part of Matthew of the writing of James. In addition, (3) it is certain that the outlook toward the Law had a major part to play in forming the ethical stance, and (4) as we mentioned above, the eschatological outlook was a determining factor.

As for the ethic itself, B. W. Bacon issues the reminder which especially concerns Matthew, but which can as well speak of James, that it is an "ethic of Filial Righteousness"--an "Ethic of Sons."¹ Under its guidance one does not go about the business of accumulating good works which may merit reward, but one is involved in "an inward renovation which makes them flow from the heart as naturally as vine and fig tree bear their fruit."² The inward disposition is in this way conformed to that of God, "the great Giver of Good."³

tribe, using such thought patterns as his readers would understand.

It is even less certain who the earliest readers of Matthew were (see our earlier discussion pp. 70-80). However, if Stendahl's thesis is correct we may describe a Christian school molded after the Scribal pattern, somewhere in Palestine or Syria. This Gospel has marks of the rabbinic style. If Matthew has used James, as we suggest, he has re-inserted marks of Palestinian Jewish thought, to make it more appropriate to his purpose.

¹B. W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930), pp. 339f.

²Ibid., p. 343.

³Ibid.

Bacon has pointed out also ambiguity toward the Law which one may find not only in Matthew but also in James. It is in Matthew a "New Torah,"¹ but Jesus' relation to the Law, it is said, "certainly was not in any sense an attitude of rejection or criticism, whether of the whole or any part."²

It is appropriate that we have brought this study to a close on an ethical note: it is this for which the Epistle of James is perhaps best known,³ and it is this which the Gospel of Matthew so frequently adds to the tradition of Jesus which we derive from the other Gospels. Kittel, too, in the "conclusion and epilogue" to his article, "Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes," comments on this emphasis:

. . . We must guard against making the word "Jewish-Christianity" a catchword and a pattern. Naturally there was a Jewish Christianity which threatened to counterfeit and to Judaize, and thus to corrupt the Gospel; we have sufficient clear traces of this, just as we have of the battle which Paul led against these corrupters of Christianity. But there was also another Jewish Christianity--namely, Jewish people who, moved by Jesus, sought to orient their thinking and doing toward him. In the early time, which the Epistle of James shows us, they had not yet taken up any influence from a Pauline or Johannine theology. It may be that they have no theology at all, properly so-called, since that which one could call the "theology of the Epistle of James" would, as far as pure "theology" goes, be a rather meager thing. There are statements of practical wisdom, many of

¹Ibid., p. 342f. ²Ibid., p. 357.

³The frequency of the imperative in James is but one indication of the pronounced tendency of the writer to exhort his readers to ethical behavior. This tendency has also contributed to the reputation of "legalism" which many associate with the epistle, and which brought forth Luther's unfortunate epithet, "right strawy epistle."

them in a form in which pious men, Jews and non-Jews alike, have spoken in regard to their lives. But in our document it is apparent that these men live in the tradition of the word of Jesus, . . . at the same time that they intend to stay in the shadow of the end, waiting for the return of the Lord, yet that this eschatological knowledge did not result in apocalyptic speculation, but rather required obedience to the demand of Jesus for love, for honesty, for brotherhood, for mercy, for a truly authentic social ethic and for a practical Christianity. One may perhaps simply describe these men, insofar as the Epistle allows us to see them, thus: that they lead their daily lives of piety so that they strive to conform themselves to the word of their Lord and wait on his coming.

If someone should be amazed that consequently in an authentic document of the earliest apostolic time there is so little addressed to the theological problems of Christology and soteriology, then it would be well to answer that here stands a man for whom everything is comprehended in the caption, "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," and for whom the whole sense and yield of all christological and soteriological formulations stands on the same point from which his Lord has spoken: "Not every one who says to me Lord, Lord! shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but rather they who do the will of my Father in Heaven."¹

The ethical demand of the gospel of Christ is at the heart of the Epistle of James: this emphasis is primary also in the Gospel of Matthew. And though there are many similarities between the two documents, the consistent core is the radical emphasis which both writers placed upon action as the proper result of belief.

¹G. Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort . . ." pp. 104-105.

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